

Romanian police disperse protesters after deal

RIMNICU VILCEA (R) — Romanian police sprayed tear gas on Friday to disperse protesters in the town of Rimnicu Vilcea, following the departure of striking coal miners whose militant leaders had struck a deal with the government. Reporters said the clashes erupted after buses carrying thousands of miners drove out of the town 170 km northwest of Bucharest headed for the Jiu Valley coalfield. Troops used tear gas and batons to disperse about 500 residents who surrounded local government offices, hurled stones and shouted anti-government slogans. The protesters also demanded proof that miners' leader Mircea Cosma was safe after talks with Prime Minister Radu Vasile at a nearby monastery. Cosma was seen heading off with the buses after reaching an accord rescinding pit closures and securing pay concessions (see earlier story on page 5).

Volume 24 Number 7051

AMMAN SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1999, SHAHWAL 6, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي

Former Argentine officers charged in kidnapping case

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — A federal judge indicted seven former military officers from Argentina's 1976-83 dictatorship on Friday as part of a deepening investigation into the disappearances of at least 200 babies during the country's "dirty war." Judge Adolfo Bagnasco formally charged the junta leaders, already under arrest following previous questioning in the case, with child kidnapping and forgery of identity documents. A total of nine officers have been detained in recent months as officials try to determine if a systematic plan existed to illegally adopt children born to jailed dissidents during the "dirty war" campaign against suspected leftists and opponents of the military regime.

Two ethnic Albanians killed

PRISTINA (AFP) — Two ethnic Albanians were killed and three injured by Serb security forces in southwestern Kosovo late Thursday, Kosovo Albanian Information Centre (KIC) said Friday. The incident happened in two villages, Bela Crkva and Sokoc, south of Obotovac. KIC said, adding that numerous "loud explosions" were heard in the area. The report could not be confirmed by independent sources. Meanwhile, the Kosovo Albanian Committee for Human Rights reported that six ethnic Albanians were arrested Friday in Vucitrin, some 25 kilometers north from Pristina.

Woman fined for protest against Iraq bombings

LONDON (AP) — A 55-year-old woman was fined in court Friday after she admitted spraying graffiti on Britain's war memorial to protest the nation's part in the bombing of Iraq last month. Sylvia Boyes argued in court that the British government were acting illegally by bombing Iraq and that she therefore had a "lawful excuse" for spraying paint on the Cenotaph war memorial and on the doors of the Ministry of Defence. She was arrested Dec. 16 after an organised protest and was charged with spraying under the inscription "The Glorious Dead" on the Cenotaph war memorial the words, "not in my name."

Ex-Pentagon lawyer convicted of spying

WASHINGTON (R) — A former Pentagon lawyer and her labour organiser husband, both onetime campus radicals, were sentenced on Friday to lengthy prison terms for spying for East Germany and other nations as part of a two-decade conspiracy. A federal judge handed down the sentence of 21 years and 10 months in prison for Theresa Squillacote, a former senior staff attorney in the office of the deputy undersecretary of defence for acquisition reform. And U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton in Alexandria, Virginia, sentenced Squillacote's husband, Kurt Stand, an international labour union representative, to 17 years and six months in prison.

Freetown archbishop flees captors

ROME (R) — The Roman Catholic archbishop of Freetown and four Xaverian missionaries, kidnapped by Sierra Leone rebels, have escaped their captors, the Rome-based Catholic missionary news agency MISNA said on Friday. Archbishop Joseph Henry Ganda was abducted around Jan. 12-13 during fighting in Freetown between Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and the West African ECOMOG force backing President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Islamic Jihad leader released

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian authorities have released a leader of the Islamic Jihad group who was arrested last month for calling for the assassination of Bill Clinton during the U.S. president's historic visit to the Gaza Strip, security sources said Friday. Just days ahead of Clinton's arrival, Sheikh Abdullah Al Shami told a Spanish television station that he would be "very happy" if the U.S. president was assassinated during his visit to Gaza.

King receives Prince Hassan

'Reports of King sending emissaries to Prince groundless'

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday received HRH Crown Prince Hassan at his home, Bab Al Salam, informed sources said. The sources did not disclose further details of the meeting, but dismissed media reports claiming that King Hussein had sent Royal emissaries to Prince Hassan to inform him that he was officially no longer heir to the Hashemite Throne.

The sources said international agencies' reports of "Royal envoys" were "groundless." Meanwhile, amid mounting speculation, officials and analysts said they expected King Hussein to publicly announce his decision concerning the succession to the Throne soon.

The Royal Court would neither confirm nor deny local and international media reports that King Hussein was to address the nation today. Jordanians spent the weekend discussing statements by the King on Wednesday that he came back from his successful six-month chemotherapy treatment in the U.S. with a "lot of thoughts and ideas" about the country's future and the succession to the Throne.

In an interview with CNN on Wednesday, one day after his return home, the King explained that his decision in 1965 to appoint Prince Hassan as Crown Prince was prompted by the fact that "there was no substitute but to find a member of the family close by to take over." At that time of regional upheaval and instabil-

ity, Prince Abdullah was only three years old. "But that did not mean at all that it was the end of the story," the King told CNN.

Sources interpreted the King's reference to the constitutional amendment introduced to name his younger brother as Crown Prince as an indication that the Monarch intended to revert to the original constitutional provision according to which his eldest son inherits the Throne.

"The King's words on CNN indicated that he wants to go back to how things were before the Constitution was amended," one former official said. Most political sources contacted by the Jordan Times agreed that the choice of HRH Prince Abdullah as heir to the throne would represent the smoothest and most natural course, since it would not require constitutional amendments.

Officials noted that the current text of Article 28 of the Constitution — governing the succession to the Throne — would also enable Prince Abdullah in the future to appoint his younger brother HRH Prince Hamzah as Crown Prince.

Nineteen-year-old Prince Hamzah, currently following his father's footsteps at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst, in the U.K., is the King's eldest son by Her Majesty Queen Noor. The original 1952 constitutional text, stipulating that the Hashemite crown "shall pass from the holder of the Throne

King meets with Tarawneh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday received Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and renewed his confidence in the Tarawneh government. The King commended the government's performance and accomplishments at various levels, giving his total support to the government to continue its work in the service of the people. Tarawneh highly valued the King's confidence and assured him that his team will continue to work under the King's guidance to serve the country and its people.

Court denial of a report that appeared in an international Arabic magazine. The report, published on Jan. 8 in Al Watan Al Arabi, claimed that King Hussein had discussed the succession to the throne in meetings in the U.S. with American officials.

The Royal Court's strong denial, issued on Jan. 17, stated: "No one has the right to speculate on what goes on in the King's mind regarding decisions that he considers from time to time a necessity aiming to correct the path and to achieve more stability and security for all Jordanians."

"The statement denied the [alleged] meetings, but almost confirmed changes to the succession line," one former minister told the Jordan Times. Former and current officials also said they expected a government change soon.

"The King indicated that changes will affect both the Royal family and the government," one former minister said. "There will certainly be a government change," said another official, "to match the sweeping changes taking place at the top of the state."

Arab League FMs to discuss draft resolution on lifting Iraq sanctions

Khatib to leave today for Cairo meeting

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — The Arab League foreign ministers are expected to discuss on Sunday a draft resolution that appeals to the U.N. Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1990 but also calls on Baghdad to respect U.N. resolutions and the sovereignty of Kuwait and its borders, diplomats said.

The draft resolution for the ministerial meeting was prepared and circulated recently to Arab foreign ministers, one Arab diplomat based in Cairo told the Jordan Times.

He said the draft resolution was hammered out at two meetings earlier this month in Cairo between the foreign ministers of Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib heads for Cairo today to attend the Sunday ministerial meeting.

"Jordan always supports

calls for holding an Arab meeting for the benefit of the Arab Nation," a senior Jordanian official told the Jordan Times on Friday.

The Sunday meeting was requested by Yemen in December to discuss the possibility of holding an Arab summit to discuss the U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq.

The London-based daily Al Hayat quoted Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid on Friday as describing the resolution as "balanced, and reflecting the feelings of Arab peoples who want a united Arab position to end the sufferings of the Iraqi people."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf on Thursday accused the United States of asking Arab governments to soften the resolutions of the Cairo meeting.

Agence France Presse reported Friday that Sahhaf is to present a different

draft resolution at the meeting calling for the "immediate lifting of sanctions" and an end to the no-fly zones in the north and south of the country.

Sahhaf said his country would follow closely the deliberations at the foreign ministers' meeting, and warned that if the participants adopted the U.S. line, Iraq would adopt a "new position." He did not elaborate.

The Iraqi government, in a meeting Thursday chaired by President Saddam Hussein, announced that Baghdad rejected in advance any initiative which did not condemn the air strikes.

However, the Arab diplomat said there is Arab consensus that a comprehensive review of the sanctions should be conducted in order to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

"It has been eight years since the sanctions were

imposed on Iraq, and the Arabs believe that the Iraqi people are paying a heavy price," the diplomat said.

But the prospects of holding an Arab summit to discuss the Iraqi situation are slim, he said, citing probable differences between the ministers on reaching a decision on such a summit. He said that although some Arab states have come out in favour of holding the summit, "the Gulf states have refused to take part in a summit attended by Iraq."

Jordan, meanwhile, said it supported a summit but only if it had a clear agenda.

"We believe an Arab summit needs a clear agenda in order to guarantee its success," one official said.

The most recent Arab summit was held in Cairo in 1996 to discuss the peace process shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was elected to office.



Two citizens celebrate His Majesty King Hussein's return during a parade held yesterday in Amman (Photo by Yusef 'Allan)

King to meet with Omani, Egyptian leaders this week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman is expected to arrive in Amman on Monday, while Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is expected to arrive later this week to congratulate His Majesty King Hussein on his recovery and to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East.

Since his return to Jordan on Tuesday, King Hussein has received telephone calls and messages of good wishes and congratulations from world leaders. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who earlier phoned the King, sent a cable on Thursday in which he said: "We thank God Almighty for your recovery and your return to your country and your nation, who are overwhelmed with joy and hope that you will resume your role alongside the leaders of our nation towards achieving further strength and solidarity in the face of circumstances and challenges facing the nation."

King Fahd added: "We implore God to bless you with continued health and to bless

your country with continued progress and prosperity." Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, crown prince and deputy prime minister of Saudi Arabia, congratulated King Hussein in a message, saying "I am pleased to address you as a brother and leader, to congratulate myself and my brothers the leaders of the Arab and Muslim World as well as the people of Jordan over your safe return to your country completely cured and blessed by God."

Prince Abdullah said, "I was delighted when I saw you in Washington standing up and combating illness with a strong will and with great faith in God and I was certain that I would see you returning home after overcoming the difficult circumstances in order to resume your role and your responsibilities along with the loyal rulers of the Arab and Muslim World."

King Hussein received on Friday phone calls from the leader of the Israeli Labour Party, Ehud Barak, Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Israeli Defence Minister

Yitzhak Mordechai, who congratulated him on his recovery and safe return home.

Also Thursday, the King received a message of good wishes from King Hassan of Morocco, a congratulatory telephone call from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and cables from the governor of Australia, the president of the Dominican Republic and the prime minister of Pakistan, among others.

In New York, Arab ambassadors to the U.N. expressed their good wishes to the King during their weekly meeting attended by Jordanian Ambassador Hassan Abu Nimeh, who said afterwards that the envoys voiced their congratulations over the King's recovery.

The office of Jordan's mission to the U.N. received calls from the Jordanian community in the U.S. expressing their delight over the King's recovery and safe return.

Around the country, official and public celebrations continued Thursday and Friday to commemorate the King's return.

Mordechai set to leave Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (R) — Dovish Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, one of Israel's most popular politicians, took a preliminary step on Friday towards leaving Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party and running for prime minister.

Speculation mounted that Mordechai would join a new centrist party after he missed a 1 p.m. (1100 GMT) deadline on Friday to put his name forward with the right-wing Likud for a place on its list of parliamentary candidates in the May 17 election.

Signs of a rift with Netanyahu were even more evident when Mordechai's office said after the deadline passed that the defence chief would hold talks in Egypt on Sunday with President Hosni Mubarak.

Netanyahu's office said the visit had not been cleared with

the prime minister. "No, the prime minister did not know about it," Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky told Reuters.

In a statement, Mordechai's political adviser Meni Ben-Ham said the defence minister was still a member of Likud, but added "He will meet in the coming days with political figures" — a sign he was weighing his options.

Mordechai, 54, has kept Israel in suspense for weeks over whether he would turn against Netanyahu, who launched the former general's political career in 1996.

"There will be no weekend meeting with the prime minister," Ben Ham said. Mordechai did meet on Friday, however, with former army chief Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Likud defector Roni Milo, who are both centrist candi-

dates. "Mordechai is on his way to the centrist party but not just to the centrist party but to the number one spot in this party," said Israel Radio political correspondent Yaron Dolek.

He has consistently scored high in opinion polls and pleased U.S. leaders by frequently urging the Israeli government to make progress in hand-for-security peacemaking with the Palestinians.

"Anyone who wants to go with us is welcome to do so, and anyone who does not want to join us won't. It's as simple as that. This is not personal," Netanyahu said on Thursday.

Opposition Labour Party leader Ehud Barak, whom opinion polls show running neck-and-neck with Netanyahu, welcomed the possible new challenge to the incumbent prime minister.

'Ethnic-cleansing weapons' possible within 10 years — report

LONDON (AFP) — Advances in genetic research raise the possibility of biological weapons, available within 10 years, that would attack one ethnic group but leave others untouched, according to a report published Thursday.

Given the availability of bomb-making instructions and "recipes" on the Internet, the British Medical Association said, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972 needs "urgent" strengthening.

While "genetic weapons which target a particular ethnic group are not currently a practical possibility," the report concludes "it would be com-

placent to assume they could never be developed in the future."

The report "Biotechnology, weapons and humanity" by the BMA, which represents all Britain's doctors, predicted their existence within "five or 10 years" and warned of their attractiveness to terrorists.

"Scientific knowledge has been quickly exploited for weapons development in the past," said Vivienne Nathanson, of the BMA, adding she saw no reason why this trend would alter with genetics.

The report explains that genetic research into humans leads almost every day to further understanding of the differences in disparate human groups.

Such differences were apparent in blood groups or varying resistance to disease, such as developed by certain groups in west Africa against malaria. Two key developments were highlighted by the experts. One is the Human Genome Project which aims to map the entire human genetic blueprint by 2003.

The other is gene therapy, a technology still in its infancy, which uses "vectors" such as harmless viruses to carry corrective DNA into malfunctioning cells.

The BMA warned that theoretically nothing could stop the development of "viral vectors or micro-organisms" (bacteria, virus, etc.) capable of tar-

geting an enemy group with a particular genetic make-up while sparing their neighbours.

"In short, if there are distinguishing DNA sequences between groups, and if these can be targeted in a way that is known to produce a harmful outcome, a genetic weapon is possible," said the report.

Far from being science fiction, it cited a report in the strategic military magazine Jane's on weapons expressed by U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen in June 1997 about "certain types of pathogens that would be ethnic specific so that they could eliminate certain ethnic groups."

"The scientific community is very

close to being able to manufacture" such weapons, said Cohen.

There have also been sporadic reports of Israeli developing such weapons to use against Arabs and white South Africans targeting blacks in a similar fashion.

On Nov. 15, Britain's Sunday Times reported Israel was working on an "ethnic" biological weapon which will hit Arabs and not Jews by distinguishing between their genetic differences.

Quoting Israeli military sources and Western intelligence services, the report said researchers were trying to isolate distinctive "Arab" genes in order to develop a virus, transmitted

by air or water, which would target them specifically.

The programme, based in the top secret Ness Ziona germ warfare laboratory south of Tel Aviv, is complicated by the fact that Jews and Arabs are genetically close, both being of Semitic origin, the report said.

The BMA did not argue that all genetic research should stop, recognising its possibilities for saving lives and advancing medical treatment.

But the report stressed: "Getting rid of weapons once they are produced is very difficult; governments may be reluctant to give up weapons that the rest of the world finds unacceptable."

Fahd launches low-key Saudi centenary

RIYADH (R) — King Fahd inaugurated low-key celebrations of a Saudi national centenary on Friday at a time of economic austerity for the world's largest oil power.

The king, born in 1922 and now showing visible signs of his age and infirmity, performed one of the main events launching two weeks of celebrations from the front seat of his limousine.

The car was driven to a corner of Riyadh's Justice Square where the king was handed an infra-red device to perform the unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

The square is where convicted drug traffickers, murderers and rapists are publicly beheaded. On this day, it was crowded with princes, courtiers and soldiers. Fountains played in the bright, wintry sunshine.

The plaque records the name of the small band of desert warriors who accompanied King Fahd's late father Abdul-Aziz Ben Abdulrahman Al Faisal Al Saud, founding sovereign of Saudi Arabia, in a dawn raid on Riyadh which set the stage for the unification of much of the Arabian peninsula — then "a land of mystery and fear", as one Saudi newspaper put it.

The raid, in which the regional governor and his men were killed, was exactly 100 years ago according to the lunar Hijri calendar observed in Saudi Arabia. The date corresponds to Jan. 15, 1902.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was proclaimed in 1932 after three decades of military conquests ended centuries ended internecine warfare between feuding bedouin tribes who were united under the House of Saud's Islamic banner "There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is His messenger".

"Any keen observer of the

history of the Saudi House will have to realise that this family emerges from the depths of its people," King Fahd said in a speech read for him by one of his younger brothers Prince Salman, Riyadh regional governor.

"It is not alien or a passing phenomenon on this land. No one can ever, by the grace and help of God, pluck a hair of this body. The strength of the Saudi House is due to the fact that it forms one of the indivisible part of its people and will remain so forever."

King Fahd gave thanks to God for His "overt and covert bounties that He had bestowed upon this country and its people" and said the greatest of all bounties was Islam, founded within the boundaries of what is now the modern Saudi state by Prophet Mohammad 14 centuries ago.

Turkey warns any shelter for Ocalan will be 'open act of hostility'

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey on Friday warned its neighbors that if any of them granted refuge to Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, Ankara would consider it an "open act of hostility" and act accordingly.

"We trust that no country will shelter the terrorist leader," Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit told reporters after meeting with Foreign Minister Ismail Cem. "But especially our neighbors should know that we will consider it an act of open hostility to do so, and that we will act accordingly." "Nothing is certain for the moment," Ecevit said in answer to questions about Ocalan's whereabouts. "There are only various rumours."

"The Russian authorities have assured us that they have ascertained that he is not in Russia," Ecevit added. "So even if he was there earlier, he has left, but it is unclear which country he went to," he said. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov earlier Friday announced that Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK), is not in Russia. "We can now say officially: Ocalan is not in Russia," Ivanov said.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), the main successor to the KGB, said Ocalan was "not currently" on Russian territory. Ocalan is wanted in Turkey on terrorism and murder charges linked to the PKK's 14-year armed campaign for an independent homeland in the southeast of the country. He arrived in Italy on Nov. 12 from Russia, where he had been hiding after Syria expelled him under Turkish pressure in October. Since leaving Rome last Saturday, he has so far managed to keep his whereabouts unknown.



Iraqi citizens attend an auction, Friday in Baghdad, where life returned to normal one month after U.S.-British strikes (AFP photo)

Libyans accused in French airliner bombing to be tried

PARIS (AFP) — Six alleged Libyan secret agents accused in the 1989 bombing of a French airliner in which 170 people died will be tried in absentia on March 8, judicial officials said Thursday.

The six, accused of murder or complicity in murder "in connection with a terrorist enterprise," will be tried by a special court of seven magistrates, headed by Judge Yves Jacob, the sources said. The trial is expected to last three days.

The airliner, a DC-10 operated by the company UTA, was on a flight between Brazzaville, Congo, and Paris on Sept. 19, 1989 when it blew up over Niger, killing all 170 passengers and crew. The debris was found scattered across a huge swathe of the Sahara desert.

Under French law, lawyers cannot argue in court on behalf of persons tried in absentia. In addition, courts only have the right to acquit or apply maximum penalties to an absent defendant. And if that person is eventually arrested, he or she has to stand trial again.

The six include Abdullah Senoussi, Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's brother-in-law, whom French counter-espionage consider to be the former number two in Libyan intelligence and the man behind the attack.

The others are Abdullah Alazragh, who was a diplomat in Brazzaville in 1989, Ibrahim Naeli, Musbah Arbas, Abdul Salam Hamouda, considered Senoussi's right-hand man, and Abdul Salam Shitani.

Four international arrest warrants were issued by France in 1991, when examining magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere officially pointed the finger at Libya.

He focused his inquiry on networks of Islamists close to Iran, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Syria, Shiite activist groups and Bernard Yanga, a pro-Libyan Congolese dissident.

The Libyan government, in 1996, said it had set explosives identical to those used in the bombing, purportedly from anti-Qadhafi activists.

The United Nations passed two resolutions in 1992, condemning the UTA bombing as well as the attack on a Pan Am jumbo jet over Lockerbie, Scotland on Dec. 21, 1988 that killed 270 people.

Only Iraqi royalists give U.S. plan to aid opposition public welcome

DUBAI (AFP) — Washington won the backing of Iraqi royalists Thursday for its not-so-secret plan to oust President Saddam Hussein but had yet to win the support of any of the main opposition factions.

The small Movement for a Constitutional Monarchy, which wants to restore the royal family overthrown in 1958, said it welcomed the \$97 million in congressional aid which President Bill Clinton offered to seven named Iraqi opposition groups Wednesday.

"The Movement for a Constitutional Monarchy welcomes the support of the United States and the American people and their decision to stand by the Iraqi people and put an end to the suffering since Saddam came to power," a party statement said.

"We welcome any moral or political support which is given without preconditions and which might help our people... to have done with the dictatorial regime without recourse to direct foreign military intervention," it said.

The royalists, headed by Ali Ben Hussein, a descendant of the Hashemite family which used to rule Iraq, were one of seven Iraqi opposition factions which Clinton named as eligible for U.S. support and is the first to openly welcome it.

The main Shiite Muslim opposition group, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Thursday snubbed the U.S. offer.

"We will not accept U.S. aid for a change in Iraq," its leader, Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer Al Hakim, told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat.

The three Kurdish groups which between them control most of northern Iraq — the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the smaller Islamic Movement of Iraq (IMI) — were all lukewarm in their reaction.

"The leadership of the PUK is studying the question. But, in principle, we are not in favour of aid with strings attached," said Fuad Massum, a London-based member of the PUK leadership.

The KDP said it had not been officially informed of the U.S. decision. Washington had "not consulted" the KDP in advance, said its London representative, Dilshad Miran.

The two other groups named by the U.S. president — the London-based opposition umbrella group, the Iraqi National Congress, and the Amman-based and pro-Western Iraqi National Accord — have yet to give any public reaction.

Washington appointed the current number two at its embassy in Ankara, Frank Ricciardone, Thursday as Special Representative for Transition in Iraq to coordinate its support for the opposition.

Iraq boosts troops to quell unrest in south

LONDON (R) — Iraq has built up its armed forces in the south over the past month to quell internal opposition and intimidate neighbouring Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, an opposition group said on Friday.

Hamid Al Bayati, of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Opposition in Iraq (SCIRI), said the build-up began in mid-December and included surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles.

"It's difficult to know what he is going to do because he is unpredictable," Bayati, the group's London spokesman, told Reuters in reference to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"These troops have been used to suppress any kind of popular uprising. But we cannot rule out that some of these forces might be used against neighbouring countries following the latest Iraqi statements," Bayati was commenting on a BBC report that Baghdad was moving troops and tanks into southern Iraq towards the border with Kuwait and the southern no-fly zone imposed by the West.

A BBC reporter said that he had seen a stream of armour and guns moving down the road towards the southern city of Basra near Kuwait, which Iraq occupied in 1990-91.

Iraq has accused Kuwait of treachery for allowing its territory to be used as launch pads for some of the Western air strikes made against Baghdad in December.

Iraq also this month slammed the small oil-producing state for receiving SCIRI leader Mohammad Baqer Al Hakim, saying he was in the country to plan sabotage against Baghdad.

Bayati, whose organisation is seen by Western diplomats in the Gulf as an influential opposition group in the Shiite south of Iraq, said the movements filmed by the BBC had been going on since the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The reinforcements had entered southern marshes that have been a hotbed of opposition to Baghdad, he said.

Last month Bayati reported Iraqi security reinforcements in the south had carried out hundreds of summary executions and detentions in the region — a charge subsequently echoed by the U.S. State Department and denied by Baghdad.

Labour Party avoids one top-level defection

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's opposition Labour Party has avoided the defection of another senior member. Haim Ramon, by adopting a primary system that should ensure him a top slot on the party's ticket for parliamentary elections in May, Labour officials said Friday.

Ramon, a former head of the powerful Histadrut trade union federation and one of the most respected political strategists in

Labour, had threatened to quit the party over a recent reform to its primary procedures he said would deny him a safe spot on the parliamentary slate.

At the urging of party chairman Ehud Barak, who defeated Ramon in a party leadership race in 1997, the Labour central committee adopted a new primary system during a meeting Thursday night, officials said. The new system permits

the 160,000 Labour members to rank by preference their choices for the Labour slate of candidates for parliament in the May 17 elections.

Ramon, an outspoken politician with many enemies inside the party, had feared that a primary election with no ranking of nominations would leave him in an embarrassingly low spot on the ticket.

The primary election is due to be held on Feb. 15.

After the central committee decision, Ramon announced that he would remain in Labour and run for a seat in parliament.

Two other senior Labour figures have already quit the party and joined a new centrist formation created by former army chief Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

The pair, Hagai Ramon and Nissim Zvili, both accused Barak of running Israel's main opposition party like a dictator.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Animaniacs
16:30 The Adventures of the Bush Patrol
17:00 Drama — Neighbours
17:30 (Ch.2 links with Ch.1)
18:15 Omar Ben Abdul Aziz
19:00 New in French
19:15 French programme
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Murphy Brown
20:00 The Health Show
20:30 Drama — The Pretender
21:15 (Rania's Show)
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film — "The Earnest Story"
00:00 End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:47 Dhuhr
14:20 'Asr
17:05 Maghreb
18:25 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeth, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624833/4624811.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5683404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeth Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4626759

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

in temperatures and partly cloudy skies. Winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba it will be partly cloudy, cold at night, temperatures are rising slightly. Winds northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.04/16

Aqaba08/21

Deserts04/14

Jordan Valley12/22

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10 Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun07/12

Jerash07/15

Um Qays05/15

Madaba07/16

Petra06/18

Dead Sea12/23

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Amal Hawandeh5332350

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain4623029

Dr. Ghaleb Zarwaleh4126011

Dr. Khaldoun Asfour5332600

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy5337004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

IRBID:

Dr. Ali Shuqairi (02)7100069

Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)75360

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad (09)985550

Palestine Pharmacy (09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department5661112

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192 462111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101

Jordan Television4773111

Radio Jordan4774111

Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority5815615

Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-33200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199

The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre5856856

Luzmila4630195

Khalidi Maternity464281/6

Akileh Maternity4643441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity4642362

Malhas, J. Amman4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5607431

Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771013/3

Al-Bashir4775111/26

Army, Marka4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital5157100

Amal Hospital5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Zarqa(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

IRBID: (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555

Roman Catholic Hospital(02)272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)7101372, (02)7103101

Rosary Sisters Hospital(02)7102831, (02)7102011

Specialty Hospital(02)7103100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital(03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250. Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:30 Damascus (RJ)

09:30 New Delhi (RJ)

09:55 Karachi, Doha (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:35 Colombo (RJ)

15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:30 Cairo (RJ)

17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)

19:40 Rome (RJ)

19:40 Frankfurt (RJ)

21:15 Riyadh (add) (RJ)

00:15 Larnaca (RJ)

00:35 Paris (RJ)

06:35 Bangkok, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights

13:05 Vienna (OS)

13:

Dams collect 2.4 mcm of rain, but still at less than half of capacity



The King Talal Dam (file photo)

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The government Friday said the past week of rainfall has increased the amount of water in the dams' reservoirs by 2.4 million cubic metres (mcm), but has not managed to top up the Kingdom's dams which still hold only half their normal annual volume at this time of year.

Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Dureid Mahasneh said the major increase was in the King Talal Dam, which received 1.4 mcm, while the other four main dams collectively received 1 mcm.

Before last week's rainfall, the drop in water levels in the nation's dams was reported as follows: the King Talal Dam has dropped from 72 mcm to 32 mcm, Ziglab Dam from 3.5 mcm to 1.2 mcm and Wadi Arab Dam from 16 mcm to 6 mcm. The Wadi Sha'eb and Kafra dams as well as the desert dams are nearly empty.

Mahasneh told the Jordan Times that the flow of the Yarmouk River's water has increased from 3.6 cubic metres per second to 5.6, and thus, the additional water should be channelled to Lake Tiberias where it will be stored and reclaimed next summer.

The Yarmouk provides the Kingdom with 135 mcm a year, while Tiberias supplies 60-80 mcm annually.

The secretary general added that if the winter continues to receive such low amounts of rainfall, the authority will go ahead with a scheme designed to cope with the drought, officially announced by the Cabinet last Saturday.

The government said it would reduce the amount of water pumped to the Southern Ghor region for agricultural use by 50 per cent, to the Northern Ghor by 20 per cent and to the central Ghor by 10 per cent.

Currently, the volume of water used to sustain the country's agricultural industry are estimated at around 650 mcm.

The Water Authority said it is currently studying "difficult" regulations to ration water supplies for bananas and citrus fruits, while summer crops such as mallow, eggplant and corn may be prohibited.

Agriculture Minister Mejem Khreishah said most of last week's rainfall was absorbed by the soil, and, as a result, the water amounts did not fill the dams.

Khreishah added that the drought has damaged grazing lands, which might not be available next year.

Last week, the minister said the government will set up a fund to ensure JD12 million in interest-free loans to livestock breeders in order to help them buy barley and grain at reduced prices.

He added that the government will also allocate JD500,000 for livestock medicines and that grazing reserves will be open to the public.

These measures are meant to help breeders of over three million heads of livestock in Jordan to provide feed for their animals.

Jordan annually produces only 30,000 tonnes of the 500,000 tonnes of barley required to feed cattle and

13,000 of the 15,000 tonnes of bran required.

Furthermore, the Ministries of Water and Irrigation and Agriculture will provide water for livestock from desert wells while the Ministry of Water and Irrigation will continue to ration water supplies.

The ministry's plan will give priority to drinking water, increasing the amount of water pumped to Amman by 10 mcm from the Yarmouk River and Lake Tiberias. The Amman governorate receives around 90 mcm a year, according to an official report.

The Yarmouk's water will be stored in Al Karamah Dam, which has a 19 mcm capacity, to meet Amman's needs, according to the scheme.

Jordan relies mainly on rain-water to meet domestic, agricultural and industrial needs, which is tapped from surface water sources, such as rivers, and renewable groundwater sources.

Rainfall, which has dipped to just two per cent of the seasonal average in December and January, accounts for about 60 per cent of Jordan's water supply.

The drought currently affecting Jordan is the worst since the 1950s, according to the Meteorological Department.

The department yesterday said this week's weather is expected to be relatively cold and partly cloudy with a chance of scattered rain, especially in the northern parts of the Kingdom.

On His Majesty King Hussein's return:

'I'm in awe of this human being' — Princess Aisha



Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — The thunderous enthusiasm with which His Majesty King Hussein was received on his return from the United States closed the door on a sad and worrying chapter in Jordan's history, but through six dark months, members of the Royal family rediscovered the profound impact the Monarch has had on their own lives as well as those of all Jordanians.

King Hussein, viewed as a pillar of stability throughout his 46 years of rule in a region fraught with regional turmoil, is the longest-ruling monarch in the world, King Hussein. At home, he is looked upon as a patriarch whose return was received as a father coming back home to head his family once again.

"It's almost difficult to describe the many emotions I feel at a time like this," said Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein about her father's return to the

Kingdom.

"I feel incredibly lucky to have him as a father. But mostly, I'm in awe of this human being who brings together and unites Jordanians, Palestinians, Muslims and Christians in their love for him," Princess Aisha told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

King Hussein left the Kingdom on July 14, 1998, for Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota where he was

diagnosed and treated for non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

King Hussein underwent six rounds of chemotherapy treatment for his lymphatic cancer. He was absent for half a year; the longest he has ever been away from the country.

The King's absence generated a general atmosphere of unease and worry among the population of 4.2 million, but last Tuesday, he returned to a rapturous welcome from Jordanians and the Royal family, who describe the last six months as some of the most trying in their lives.

"I feel as if the general feelings of depression and worry have been lifted and that we are all working together to welcome our King home with love, respect, and great affection," the Princess said.

Princess Aisha, a lieutenant colonel in the Armed Forces and head of the Directorate of Women's Affairs at the Jordanian Armed Forces, described the last six months as extreme-

ly challenging for herself and the Royal family.

Her Majesty Queen Noor was quoted recently as saying that the King's struggle with cancer had been the most daunting personal challenge in their 20-year marriage.

Despite all the difficulties and struggle, Princess Aisha believes there was a bright side to all the difficulty and struggle.

"We were able to spend so much time with him at the Mayo Clinic, to help and to support him for a change," she says. "Usually, he is always been the one to help and support us throughout our lives and careers."

Princess Aisha, third eldest daughter to King Hussein, said her sisters and herself had commuted between Jordan and the United States on a monthly basis to stay in close contact with their father.

"My sisters and I spent one month here with our children then one month with our father. Our children were very, very supportive. I'm grateful to them and to their support of each other and their cousins," the Princess said.

His Majesty is father to 11 children and grandfather to 13 grandchildren.

According to princess Aisha, the "grandchildren have been in constant contact with their 'Jido'."

"Our children have been sending him gifts and cards trying to let him see what's been happening in their lives while he was away," says the mother of two, adding that the grandchildren had prepared "something special for the King's return."

Princess Aisha feels this experience has changed her life.

"It was difficult to explain to the children what cancer was and how it could affect a family," she explained.

"I have so much respect for my father for having fought his way through this experience and for everyone who has gone through an experience like this," the Princess said.

Princess Aisha believes the strength exhibited by her father in his fight against cancer stem from love and support.

"The incredible sense of love and support from all Jordanians and people around the world gave him the courage and the strength to fight," she said.

The Princess believes that another source of determination stemmed from the King's own belief that "[he] still has a lot to do and his mission has not been completed."

"His faith in God has always kept him going throughout his career and his life, and that is the same thing that brought him through this experience as well," she said.

International leaders have hailed King Hussein's courage and transparent approach to the disease.

American President Bill Clinton said the King's influence in the October Wye River negotiations was crucial to the agreement that finally emerged.

During the course of his treatment King Hussein was asked by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to attend the Wye River Plantation negotiations.

According to Mayo Clinic officials, there are currently no traces of the cancer left in the Monarch's body. But like any cancer survivor, the King's health will continue to be monitored. He is expected to go back in March for a regular check-up.

News in Brief

Canadian minister arrives

AMMAN (J.T.) — Canadian Minister of Industry John Manley is scheduled to visit Jordan on January 22-24 as part of a regional tour that includes Israel and the West Bank. In Jordan, Manley will meet his counterpart Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Mohammad Saleh Hourani, Minister of Public Works, Housing and Transportation Naser Lawzi, Minister of Water, Energy and Mineral Resources Hani Mulki and Minister of Post and Telecommunications Suleiman Hafez. This will be Manley's first visit to Jordan, during which he will be briefed on a full range of economic activities and will explore avenues to strengthen Canadian-Jordanian cooperation.

Schools reopen today

AMMAN (J.T.) — About one million students and 60,000 teachers will head for 4,446 schools throughout the Kingdom today, according to Al Ra'i daily newspaper.

New mosques open in Madaba

MADABA (J.T.) — Three mosques were opened on Friday to worshippers at a cost of JD120,000. Director General of Madaba Awqaf Suleiman Shihan said that the three mosques are Aisha Um Al Mumin Mosque in Al Faisaliyah at a cost of JD60,000, Al Sahaba Mosque in Eastern Madaba at a cost of JD40,000 and Jaafar Ben Abi Taleb Mosque in Natufa area at a cost of JD20,000.

Labour union to discuss social security draft law at upcoming meeting

By Odeh Odeh

AMMAN — The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) is expected to start final preparations today to convene a meeting of the 102-member Central Council during the federation's general conference at the end of February.

The FJLU president Mazen Ma'aita said the two meetings should be held soon in accordance with the federation's statute.

The Central Council last June elected Ma'aita to his post and Fathallah Imrani as his deputy, in addition to a 16-member executive board. According to FJLU by-laws, the general conference should convene within no more than four months of the elections to endorse the results.

According to Ma'aita, the meeting's agenda will also include discussions

on the growing level of national unemployment, which he said now hovers around 16 per cent among labourers, one of the highest rates in the world.

While the Ministry of Labour estimates unemployment in Jordan at 14 per cent of the total workforce, the International Monetary Fund puts the figure at 18 per cent, Ma'aita noted. Independent estimates place it even higher.

He said another agenda expected to consume a great deal of the discussions is the federation's demand for a modern social security law. A new draft social security law published recently in the Arabic press drew sharp criticism from labour union heads who blasted the federation's four representatives on the Social Security Corporation's (SSC) board of directors for failing to

present the federation's views in the draft. The unions take particularly exception to the SSC's system of calculating workers' pensions.

Ma'aita along with a number of unions heads and former federation president Khaled Shreim believe the system of pension calculation should be changed to secure higher pension for the workers.

They are also demanding that the law set a minimum wage level for labourers, noting that Article 502 of the 1996 Labour Law provides for such a step to help overcome unemployment and to discourage the employment of foreign labour.

What's Going On

PLAY

- "Al Zaroub" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.
- "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.
- The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28.



WELCOME WAGON: Celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's return continued throughout last week. Thursday, the Amman Municipality organised a parade of municipality workers and private sector businesses (first two frames, photos by Petra) while yesterday, Palestinians in the Baqaa Refugee camp near Amman danced and sang (last frame, Reuters photo)

Milosevic backs down, allows U.S. envoy to stay

BELGRADE (AP) — NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia remain an option even though Belgrade has reversed its order to expel the American head of Kosovo's international monitors, a senior diplomat said Friday.

"The NATO activation order is still there to threaten, and I think President (Slobodan) Milosevic understands that very well," said Knut Vollebaek, Norway's foreign minister and head of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which runs the monitoring operation.

"I hope we can start a political process so we can avoid any kind of airstrike," he told reporters before departing for Pristina, Kosovo's capital.

Faced with a threat of NATO military action, the Yugoslav government late Friday reversed its decision to expel chief monitor William Walker.

The move came hours after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned that the entire 750-person monitoring team would be pulled out of Kosovo unless Milosevic allows Walker to remain.

A removal of the monitors probably would spell the end of the tottering ceasefire between Milosevic's forces and ethnic Albanian separatists and pave the way for NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia.

The decision sets aside the standoff over Walker but by no means signals an end to the crisis in Kosovo, an ethnic-Albanian majority province in Serbia, the main republic in

Yugoslavia.

Serb sources in Kosovo reported Friday that five Serb civilians in Nevojlani, some 30 kilometres north-west of Pristina, were kidnapped overnight by rebel Kosovo Liberation Army. There were no details.

Up to 2,000 people have been killed in fighting during the past year in Kosovo. Ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of the province's 2 million people, and most want independence.

In the past week, NATO planes have gone on alert for possible strikes against Yugoslavia, following the discovery of 45 bodies of ethnic Albanian massacre victims. Yugoslav forces have continued an offensive in the province and prevented the U.N. war crimes tribunal from investigating the massacre in Racak.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James Rubin said suspension of the expulsion order was not enough "to resolve the problems that President Milosevic has created." He said the United States and NATO still insist that the monitors be allowed to operate independently, that Yugoslavia comply with Yugoslav army withdrawals called for in an October peace agreement and permit an investigation by the U.N. war crimes court of the Racak massacre.

Vollebaek spoke of "some movement" in getting the Yugoslavs to allow the Hague tribunal to investigate the massacre, which led to the latest crisis. Vollebaek said he had spoken to the chief prosecutor Louise Arbour since his

meeting with Milosevic, but refused to elaborate.

He called for intense international diplomatic activity over Kosovo, saying a meeting of foreign ministers of the so-called Contact Group of countries involved in the Kosovo crisis might be held soon. A lower-level meeting was being held in London Friday.

Vollebaek and U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, who met Milosevic for several hours Thursday, both described the talks as "rather difficult."

U.S. spokesman James Pardee told The Associated Press that after more than four hours of talks, Milosevic remained "inflexible on all key compliance issues and continues to deny Serbian involvement in the Racak massacre."

Walker had been ordered to leave Yugoslavia by Thursday after he accused Serb police of carrying out the Racak killings. As talks went on in Belgrade, Walker defied the order and remained holed up in his office in Pristina.

In her comments in Washington, Albright demanded that Milosevic back down "by complying with U.N. resolutions, reducing the Serb security presence, cooperating with the War Crimes Tribunal and permitting the verification mission, including Ambassador Walker, to operate unhindered."

Five Finnish forensic experts unconnected to the tribunal have been allowed to examine bodies. They began work Thursday at Pristina's morgue.



Author Salman Rushdie (right) is kissed by the French Ancien Ministre Monsieur Jack Lang. The French minister presented Rushdie with the prestigious French literary award the Insignes de Commandeur des Arts et Lettres in recognition of his work as an author (Reuters photo)

Foreigners flee Indonesian spice islands

JAKARTA (R) — Terrified foreigners fled Indonesia's spice islands Friday after Muslim-Christian fighting killed at least 43 people and heightened religious tensions threatening to tear the nation apart.

The 40 mostly American and British Bible translators fled into the northern Australian city of Darwin, saying the violence on the island of Ambon, 2,300 km east of Jakarta, had made it too dangerous to stay.

"There was rioting, there was burning, there was looting," one told Australian Broadcasting Corp television.

"We decided it was best to get out... while we still could." In Jakarta, President B.J. Habibie pleaded for unity.

"It is very important to keep unity in this reform era," he told reporters. "We must not fall into the trap of rumours that could pit one race, religion and ethnic group against another."

"God willing, this incident could serve as a lesson to increase our awareness, not our prejudice." Armed forces chief General Wiranto and police chief Lieutenant-General Roessmanhadi flew to Ambon to meet local leaders and bring food supplies for 3,000 residents still sheltering in police and military compounds.

Police say 43 people died and dozens were seriously wounded over the past week in the bloodiest violence since May riots in Jakarta killed almost 1,200 people and helped force autocratic President Suharto from

power.

Several mosques and churches and almost 100 homes were torched in Ambon and neighbouring islands in the Moluccas after fighting began when a drunken man tried to extort money from a bus driver.

Television reports said the flag of the separatist Republic of South Moluccas was raised in the rioting. Police denied this.

The mainly Christian city of Ambon was quiet Friday. A curfew is in place and provincial military chief Major-General Amir Sembiring appealed to religious leaders to maintain calm.

Muslims held Friday prayers in mosques under tight security. "The situation here is like after a war," Reverend Frans Lutherus told Reuters by telephone from Ambon. "Ambon is very tense and... you can see people brandishing spears and daggers."

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation, but there are millions of Christians, Hindus and Buddhists.

Ethnic and religious tensions suppressed during Suharto's harsh 32-year rule have bubbled to the surface as the country grapples with political and economic turmoil and the military and police struggle to maintain order.

Despite sometimes violent protests seeking political reform and the economic meltdown that has thrown millions into poverty, some analysts and commentators say religious friction is the greatest threat confronting Indonesia.

"Of all the tensions that arose as a consequence of so many competing claims after the downfall of the Suharto regime, religious strife may be said to constitute one of the gravest dangers to the cohesion of the Indonesian state," Friday's English-language Indonesian Observer said in an editorial.

"The tragedy of Ambon may well further the spread and penetration of the disintegration process," Catholic sociologist Father Franz Magnis Suseno told Reuters the image of religious harmony during Suharto's rule was a sham.

"The situation is very worrying — if it can happen in the Moluccas, it could happen anywhere," Abdurrahman Wahid, who leads Indonesia's largest Muslim group, said people had lost respect for the military and Habibie's eight-month-old government.

"What starts as an insignificant misunderstanding can flare into bloody clashes. The situation is quite acute because people have become so easily agitated," he said.

Concerns over the violence in Ambon and sporadic clashes around the country sent shivers through the foreign exchange market Friday, sending the rupiah tumbling towards 9,000 to the dollar compared with 8,600/8,700 late Thursday.

The stock market is closed until Monday.

The official Antara news agency also said Friday a youth died when small-scale rioting hit two central Java towns Wednesday and Thursday.

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU mulls visa ban on Belgrade, Serb governments

BRUSSELS (AFP) — European Union governments are considering banning all members of the governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Serbia from their territories in a bid to step up the pressure on Belgrade to end the crisis in Kosovo, diplomats said. A decision whether or not to go ahead will be made by the bloc's foreign ministers at talks here Monday, "depending on developments between now and then," a senior EU official said Friday. Under an existing sanctions package, the EU has already imposed a visa ban on Yugoslav officials directly involved in the repression in Kosovo. The EU has also frozen FRY and Serbian government assets, banned new investment in Serbia and refused landing rights to the Yugoslav state airline JAT.

France to send aircraft carrier to Yugoslav shores

PARIS (R) — The French aircraft carrier Foch will leave for the Adriatic Monday to stand by for possible action in the Kosovo crisis, a military spokesman said Friday. The Foch will leave from the Mediterranean port of Toulon and take 48 hours to reach its station. It will carry 14 Super-Standard fighter-bombers and four Emdard photo-reconnaissance planes as well as helicopters, the spokesman told Reuters. The French airforce will meanwhile send eight Mirage 2000 C interceptors and four Mirage 2000 D ground attack planes to the area. The French air force already has five Jaguar strike planes and a C-160 electronics counter-measures aircraft based at Istrana, a NATO base near Italy's Adriatic coast. Defence Minister Alain Richard said Thursday France would have around 40 fighter planes stationed in Italy by the end of next week ready for strikes against Yugoslav targets. We will share our part of the responsibility at the heart of Europe and the Alliance," he told French radio. NATO has increased the pressure on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic over the past two days by sending naval forces to the Adriatic, while its planes are on 48-hour standby for possible strikes.

S. Korea says N. Korean ex-army captain seeks asylum

SEOUL (R) — South Korea said a former North Korean army captain who defected last year arrived in Seoul on Friday seeking political asylum. The 29-year-old man defected from North Korea last September, five months after being discharged from the army, the National Intelligence Service said in a statement Friday. It said the man, identified by a pseudonym, Jong Hyon-Su, had been hiding in an unspecified third country. It gave no further information. Seoul also said it had recovered the body of a man believed to be one of the spies aboard a North Korean infiltration vessel sunk last month. A spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff said the body was found tied to the vessel by an ankle. The navy Tuesday found the wreckage of the semi-submersible craft lying on the seabed off the south coast. The vessel sank on Dec. 18 after a pre-dawn firefight about 100 km south of Koje Island and 460 km from the border separating the two Koreas. North Korea has denied it had anything to do with the craft and claimed the incident was fabricated by South Korea to escalate tensions on the peninsula. The two Koreas, divided immediately after the end of imperialist Japanese rule on the peninsula in 1945, remain technically at war since their 1950-53 conflict ended with a ceasefire but not in a peace agreement.

Grenade attack in Macau kills one, injures two

MACAU (R) — A grenade attack killed a suspected Macau gangster Friday and injured two passers-by, police in the Portuguese-ruled territory said. A man hurled the grenade at the 43-year-old man, believed to be a member of a gang from the Chinese province of Fujian, near Macau's city museum. He died in hospital. An elderly couple were wounded, police said. They were in satisfactory condition. The motive for the attack was most likely a conflict between rival Fujian gangs in Macau. About a quarter of Macau's 430,000 residents are immigrants from Fujian. Macau, a gambling centre at the mouth of Pearl River estuary, has been rocked in recent years by a wave of firebombings, arson attacks, drive-by shootings and other violent crimes attributed mostly to organised-crime triads. Macau's growing violence has been a growing source of concern to China, which resumes control over the territory in December. Last September, China said it would station People's Liberation Army troops in Macau after the handover, a decision that was widely viewed as a sign that Beijing would not tolerate organised crime. Following the handover, Macau will operate as a Special Administrative Region of China, with a status similar to that of the neighbouring former British colony of Hong Kong.

71-year-old Hungarian survives month in pantry

BUDAPEST (AFP) — A 71-year-old Hungarian woman was rescued safe and sound after spending a month locked in her pantry, surviving on boiled fruit and tomato juice, officials said Friday. The woman, who lives alone, accidentally trapped herself on December 22 after the door latch came off and remained in her hand. Firefighter Major Lajos Toerok said. Firefighters released her by cutting the window bars open Wednesday, after neighbours in a Budapest working-class district heard her cries. She was doing "fine" despite her ordeal, firefighters said.

Giraffe-martyr teaches Chinese to love and respect animals

BEIJING (AFP) — A life-size replica of Shanghai-Yokohama, a giraffe killed by tourist litter, is being used to teach Chinese to "love animals and respect nature," official media said Friday. The giraffe, born in Yokohama, Japan before being sent as "an envoy of friendship" to the Shanghai Zoo in 1980, died in 1993 after consuming non-perishable waste discarded by visitors, the Xinhua news agency said. It was reported that Shanghai-Yokohama was found hitting her head against her shed wall just prior to her death. An autopsy found two large bundles of plastic bags filling her stomach. Concerned citizens donated money to build the "Pavilion of Love" where Shanghai-Yokohama's spirit resides, drawing mourning crowds and teaching a new generation of Chinese to respect all forms of life. The pavilion includes the life-sized replica of the giraffe. "Animals are companions for human beings. We should protect them and treat them like friends," said one student visiting the pavilion with her classmates.

Carter, meets Abubakar, praises return to civilian rule

ABUJA (AFP) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter met Nigeria's military ruler General Abdulsalam Abubakar Friday on the last day of a four-day visit to assess preparations for elections next month.

Carter met Abubakar for around an hour to discuss the elections and the promised return to civilian rule this year, U.S. and Nigerian officials said.

Since he arrived in the country Tuesday, the 74-year-old U.S. politician, who in 1979 became the first U.S. president to visit Africa in the post-colonial era, has met with dozens of politicians and civil society leaders in Lagos, the main city, and Abuja, the capital.

He has praised the government's plans to end the run of military regimes which have blighted Nigeria — with only a four-year break — since 1966.

Abubakar, after coming to power in June following the death of the late military ruler General Sani Abacha, promised a swift return to civilian rule and ordered elections, to be run by an

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The first elections, local polls, took place in December, followed by state polls earlier this month.

Legislative polls are due on Feb. 20, followed by presidential polls on Feb. 27. The military is then supposed to hand over to the elected government May 29.

"These are among the most important elections in the world this year," Carter said Thursday.

"The world will be watching" the return of democracy in Africa's most populous country, he said.

The Carter Centre, a private organisation he set up after leaving the White House to promote democracy and human rights, is among a number of international organisations to send monitors to assess the elections ordered by Abubakar.

Also sending monitors are the Commonwealth, which suspended Nigeria from memberships in 1993 over its human rights abuses, the European Union, the United Nations and an independent

Nigerian watchdog organisation, the Transition Monitoring Group.

Carter praised the running of the elections to date and Thursday persuaded INEC chief Justice Ephraim Akpata to authorise an increase in the number of accredited independent observers.

Friday morning, Carter met first, for breakfast, with General Yakubu Gowon, who ruled the country from July 1966 to 1975, to discuss a health project both are promoting.

He had Thursday also visited the Nigerian war college to give a talk at their Conflict Resolution Centre and praised the role of Nigerian troops in the west African intervention force currently in Sierra Leone.

Carter said he had asked his officials to see what could be done to assist Nigeria with medical supplies for troops wounded in the fighting in the west African country.

Carter was to address a press conference in Lagos later Friday before leaving for the United States via Europe.

Cambodian king urges government to save treasures

PHNOM PENH (R) — King Norodom Sihanouk has called on Prime Minister Hun Sen to save Cambodia's national heritage and stop the theft and smuggling of ancient artefacts out of the country.

The king's call came as neighbouring Thailand said it was ready to return to Cambodia 117 sandstone sculptures looted from a 12th-13th century temple in northwest Cambodia.

The pieces were seized from smugglers earlier this month.

In a message from Beijing where he is

undergoing medical checks, the king expressed concern at recent reports of the theft of carvings and statues from ancient temples.

"Regarding this serious problem I would like the prime minister to check and take proper measures to protect our national heritage," Sihanouk said in his message, released by the palace Friday.

Officials said this week that a treasure trove of ancient Cambodian artefacts, many of them looted from the Angkor and Preah Vihear temples, was being smuggled across the country's

porous border with Thailand.

Police in eastern Thailand intercepted a truck near the Cambodian border on Jan. 5 and found it carrying sculptures dismantled from the inner wall of an Angkor-era temple at Banteay Chamar, 350 km northwest of Phnom Penh.

The haul, one of the biggest of smuggled Cambodian artefacts ever made in the region, was impounded in Thailand's Prachin Buri province. Officials in Prachin Buri said Thursday they were ready to return the items

to Cambodia.

"These ancient treasures were part of the sandstone wall sculptures of Banteay Chamar temple. We are willing to return them to Cambodia as soon as possible," the director of the provincial museum, Amphan Kijngam, told Reuters.

When pieced together the 117 slabs depict a three-metre high and two-and-a-half metre wide figure of the Buddha, showing him in previous and future incarnations, Amphan said.

The carvings would fetch more than 10 million baht (\$280,000) on

the local black market, a museum official said.

A Cambodian official said this week "armed men" stole the carvings from Banteay Chamar. Cambodian government troops and opposition fighters until recently clashed intermittently in the troubled northwest of the country where the temple is located.

Thai investigators and museum officials said the carvings were looted by Cambodian government soldiers.

Cambodian soldiers, police and occasionally foreign tourists have in the past been caught

stealing artefacts and trying to smuggle them to the international black market.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas also looted many artefacts and used them to decorate their houses or hid them in jungles around their old base of Anlong Veng, seized by government forces last year.

The government is now trying to collect the items stolen by the rebels and take them to a conservation centre near the Angkor temples on the outskirts of the northern town of Siem Reap, before guerrillas-turned-smugglers steal them.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi commented on news reports that the Iraqi leadership is holding meetings with opposition party leaders. The writer welcomed the Iraqi move, which was not confirmed by Baghdad, and considered it a beginning of a new era in the history of Iraq. Whether Iraq's measure was late, or Iraq was forced to accept talking to the opposition, this step was still a very important step in the history of the Iraqi nation, said the writer. The Iraqi people should look to the future which will be bright under political diversity, said Rimawi. There must be good negotiations in the democratic process to a safe atmosphere in which the opposition can work under the law while learning from the mistakes of others, he added.

Brazilians brace for hardship

By Beatriz Lecumberri
Agence France Presse

STORES ARE running out of imported goods and retailers are bracing for the worst following the 20 per cent devaluation of national currency, the real.

Credit cards and deferred payment plans practically disappeared over the weekend, since the real's exchange rate is unpredictable.

Prices have already started rising for some items such as imported foods and Japanese-made television sets. And travel abroad is likely to take a big hit.

The buying power of the real plunged when the Central Bank let its value float in the free market.

But authorities here and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) both insist the devaluation is a first step designed to foster confidence among foreign investors in Brazil's economy.

However for regular Brazilians, the new monetary policy only means their real will be able to buy considerably less than before.

The effect was immediate: store owners and managers said their sales plunged 30 per cent in the first weekend after the Central Bank announcement.

"January is a bad month on its own, but sales hit rock bottom with last week's news," said a store owner in a central Rio shopping mall. "Consumers are scared and don't understand these changes in the economy."

Although most prices have not increased with the devaluation, imported products are an exception and stores specialising in such

items were empty over the weekend.

Distributors of high-tech products, automobiles and imported foodstuffs dread the moment their stocks run out and have to be replenished with new, more expensive products.

In some stores, however, prices have already jumped. An imported Japanese television worth 1,768 reals on Thursday rose to 2,014 reals Monday.

Perhaps the automobile sector can avoid raising their prices since brands such as Citroen, Peugeot, Chrysler and Subaru have large inventories accumulated since 1997.

The devaluation, however, is bound to change the eating habits of many Brazilians: over the past four years a sizeable number of them have grown accustomed to imported food items.

"The middle-class dream of having all the products of the developed world at hand is over," several economists pointed out.

From 1996 to 1998, Brazilians went through 29,000 tonnes of imported chocolate, 360,000 bottles of French wine and \$770 million worth of imported vegetables.

While paying 20 per cent more for cheese, French champagne, Belgian chocolate or Spanish olive oil may not dent the pocketbook of the wealthy, price inflation will also affect the food that Brazilians of more modest income eat.

On the upside, a drop in demand for expensive imports is likely to result in a greater demand for Brazilian-made equivalents.

However the unexpected spike in interest rates from an already high maximum of 36 per cent to 41 per cent announced late Mon-

day by the Central Bank is likely to put a dent in plans to decrease production costs.

And food is not the only item getting more expensive. As of this week, many Brazilians will have to curtail their travel plans. A week-long vacation in Paris, including round trip and four-star hotel, has jumped from 1,800 to 2,070 reals.

For those already on holiday abroad, the new monetary policy means their credit card purchases will now cost up to 25 per cent more than they had planned.

Leading financial research centres are already predicting an inflation rate of between six and seven per cent for 1999, provided there are no more devaluation surprises.

Before the announcement Brazil's inflation rate this year was forecast at between zero and two per cent.

Generals on front line of Israeli politics

By Howard Goller
Reuters

OLD SOLDIERS never die in Israel. They just enter politics.

As the May 17 election approaches, two former army chiefs pose the greatest challenge to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, himself a retired captain and former commander who never misses a chance to mention his own security credentials.

Generals may succeed at national politics elsewhere — World War II supreme commander for Allied forces in Europe, Dwight Eisenhower, was U.S. president from 1953-61.

But few, if any, Western democracies have so many, so often on the front lines of public life as Israel.

Ten of Israel's 15 army chiefs have been politically active.

Brigadier-generals and more senior ranks feature prominently in Israeli cabinets. One former army chief, Yitzhak Rabin, was Labour party prime minister twice — from 1974-77 and 1992-95.

The ex-army chiefs challenging 49-year-old Netanyahu are Labour's Ehud Barak, 56, and self-styled centrist Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, 54. Both are protégés of Rabin, the warrior-turned-peace-maker assassinated in 1995 for his accords with the Palestinians.

After hanging up their uniforms, generals find their way into political life naturally in a country obsessed with security. In the face of hostile Arab neighbours, the army ranks as Israel's most trusted institution in opinion polls.

Despite treaties with neighbouring Egypt and Jordan and interim peace deals with the Palestinians, Israeli voters still rate security as the main issue in election campaigns.

"It's on our hard disk," said Public

Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, a hero of Israel's 1973 war with Syria on the Golan Heights who entered politics in 1992 after retiring as a brigadier-general with 28 years in the army.

The generals are drawn to politics left and right.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, both former generals, are members of Netanyahu's rightist Likud party. On Wednesday, former deputy army chief Matan Vilnai joined Barak's left-centre Labour party.

Not all Israelis are happy that voters keep electing former commanders. Columnist Ze'ev Chafets complained in the Jerusalem Report magazine in August that most of the old soldiers had proven themselves unfit for public office.

Under the headline "The Wrong Stuff," he wrote that instead of encouraging generals to enter politics, Israelis should urge them to heed the advice of the late U.S. General Douglas MacArthur in 1951 and just fade away.

Of the 12 political generals cited in the column, Rabin alone redeemed himself and became a great prime minister, Chafets said — and that only after a failed first term 15 years earlier and a generation of civilian experience.

Israeli politicians, even non-generals, make a name for themselves with security.

Netanyahu — brother of a hero killed in the 1976 rescue of hijacked Israelis at Entebbe in Uganda — was Israel's anti-terrorism mouthpiece at the United Nations in the 1980s and wrote books about it.

Former prime minister Shimon Peres, a Nobel peace laureate, is widely regarded as having gained

nuclear capabilities for Israel by procuring the secret Dimona reactor from France. He was defence minister for the Entebbe raid.

Since most Israelis serve in the compulsory army and the military is constantly in the news, generals are household names. Leading military men are regarded as having clean hands in a country where politics is a dirty game.

"The public perceives them as people at the peak of their ability who touched the heart of the country's existence, on the most existential questions and ran the biggest, most complicated system budgetarily," said Shimon Peres.

The generals say the army prepares them for the challenge of running the country. Army brass spend years briefing cabinet ministers on security at weekly meetings, conduct peace talks with the Arabs and give interviews to the media.

"They bring a broad view to politics. They have dealt in intelligence with an eye on the world, on the region," Kahalani told Reuters in an interview. "The army enables you to analyse the enemy, the arena — to analyse all the existing means." Not all generals-turned-statesmen find the transition an easy one. Soldiers need the backing of a single commander for a given task but politicians need voters. Former generals must also adapt to not always getting their way.

Israeli generals are far from old soldiers when they retire to enter politics — Rabin was 46, Kahalani 47, Mordechai 51, Barak 53 and Lipkin-Shahak 54.

With years ahead of them, a solid academic background and hefty military pensions, ex-army chiefs can



Netanyahu on the campaign trail (Reuters photo)

afford to gamble on a political career.

Having rubbed shoulders with politicians for so many years, they may also feel they can do no worse.

"I was, you know, very intimately acquainted with the politics of government, at least in regard to security and foreign affairs," Barak told Reuters in an interview last year, a few months after taking over the Labour party.

"I was talking during cabinet meetings so they (other politicians) had a sense that I could swim without major disturbances among these sharks without losing a sense of direction and confidence." Defying militaristic stereotypes, Israeli generals have long taken the lead in peacemaking with the Arabs. Perhaps the two most moderate cabinet

ministers in Netanyahu's own government are former generals Kahalani and Mordechai.

Rabin, army chief during the 1967 Six-Day War in which Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, was the first prime minister to cede West Bank land — under a 1993 peace deal with the Palestinians. The next year he signed a treaty with Jordan.

Two architects of the first Israeli-Arab peace treaty signed with Egypt in 1979 were soldiers-turned-politicians Ezer Weizman and Moshe Dayan.

Dayan, defence minister in the 1967 war, is an icon of his era remembered for his bald head and black eye-patch. Weizman, a former air force commander and deputy army chief under Rabin, has been

Israel's president since 1993.

One of the most controversial of Israel's former generals is Sharon, a war hero forced to quit as defence minister after leading Israel into its ill-fated 1982 Lebanon invasion.

A state inquiry found him indirectly responsible for allowing the massacre of Palestinian refugees by Christian militiamen. Yet now as foreign minister, he says a Palestinian state, albeit of limited sovereignty, is a matter of time.

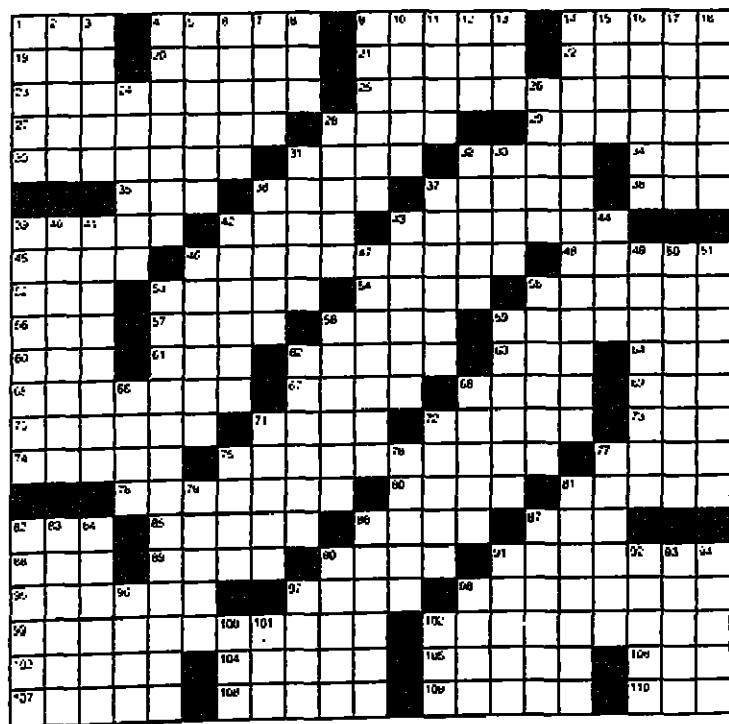
Military people are for the most part pragmatic, Kahalani said, and that includes most former generals from Sharon on the right of the political spectrum to Barak on the left.

"The army moderates us," Kahalani said. "You cannot be an extremist. You fought and you struggled, you know the reality."

The Saturday Crossword

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
By Bill Swain, New Port Richey, Florida

- ACROSS
- 1 H.S. sub
 - 4 Quarters
 - 9 Two Women's star
 - 14 Chaplin and Connelly
 - 18 Assn.
 - 20 Susan's Valley of the
 - 21 Sign of spring?
 - 22 Shag or Tatum
 - 23 Lower slopes
 - 25 Boondocks
 - 27 Sherm and Rabin
 - 28 Surf sound
 - 29 Garçon, grome, e.g.
 - 30 Makes certain
 - 31 Nothing but
 - 32 Virus lamp
 - 34 CIA's predecessor
 - 35 Newman Koppel
 - 36 Blue and Cross
 - 37 Procession of matadors
 - 38 Ready or ...
 - 39 Invited
 - 42 Take out
 - 43 Isolated
 - 44 Dwayne
 - 45 Stream sources
 - 46 Shaded area
 - 52 Chemical suffix
 - 53 Monte sisters
 - 54 Land of Los Angeles?
 - 55 Author of "The End of the Affair"
 - 56 Gp. of Sampras, Agassi, et al.
 - 57 Home runs, e.g.
 - 58 Commit a gaff
 - 59 Lessons property
 - 60 Betting guide
 - 61 Whitman School
 - 62 Grace closings
 - 63 11 on calendars
 - 64 Word ignored by alphabetizers
 - 65 Striking
 - 67 Swine
 - 68 Sewer segment
 - 69 Drench
 - 70 Brazilian port
 - 71 Roseanne, once
 - 72 Smitty, at times
 - 73 Horse morsel
 - 74 Sacked out
 - 75 Ishtar
 - 77 Sash
 - 78 Sword cases
 - 80 Highland miss
 - 81 Nucleus of
 - 82 Spanish couple?
 - 85 Privileged few
 - 86 Sugar quantity



- DOWN
- 1 Capital of Bulgaria
 - 2 Spain
 - 3 Stravinsky and Skorsky
 - 4 Snuck
 - 5 Veiled
 - 6 Island, NY
 - 7 West That
 - 8 Draft letters
 - 9 Tasks
 - 10 Speak
 - 11 Houston school
 - 12 Comic scream
 - 13 Gp. of D.C. advisers
 - 14 Delta
 - 15 Pacun of "The Piano"
 - 16 Olympian gymnast
 - 17 Mary Lou
 - 18 Back song about a singer
 - 19 Crafty to the max
 - 20 Tighter
 - 21 Start of a path?
 - 22 Make over
 - 23 Card-game displays
 - 24 Classic Premierer
 - 25 Suits for adherents
 - 26 Pulsations
 - 27 "Mission: Impossible" character
 - 28 Post and Earhart
 - 29 Stay with the pack
 - 30 Repudiation
 - 31 Laundry problems
 - 32 Lat loose
 - 33 Space telescope
 - 34 Pace of music
 - 35 Heavy imber
 - 36 One, prof.
 - 37 Highly spiced stew
 - 38 Spherical bodies
 - 39 Dispose of by decapitation
 - 40 Jason's objective
 - 41 James Merritt or Charles Edward
 - 42 Trump name
 - 43 Seneca, Cayuga, et al.
 - 44 Part of Texas
 - 45 Nine, prel.
 - 46 Warning signal
 - 47 Digestive disorder
 - 48 Evaristo's transp
 - 49 Memorize
 - 50 Comes out on top
 - 51 Rust vegetables
 - 52 Team cheer
 - 53 Type of rocker
 - 54 Broadcasting
 - 55 Repopulate
 - 56 Marlene extension?
 - 57 Felt one's way
 - 58 Self-satisfied smiles
 - 59 Pot roast
 - 60 Out in the open
 - 61 Piece of a pound
 - 62 Sequence
 - 63 Guy
 - 64 New
 - 65 Elba tributary
 - 66 Turner and Clanton
 - 67 Valley
 - 68 Pies and ginger
 - 69 Tavern by a tube station
 - 70 Cart of the gradiron

Lebanese farmers turn to pot

By Jacques Lhuillery
Agence France Presse

FARMERS IN Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, disappointed at unfulfilled U.N. promises to provide programs for alternative crops, have reverted to the lucrative age-old business of growing hashish.

"It is this or famine. From 1992 until 1997, I agreed to play the game, but enough is enough," said Abu Ali, a bearded 34-year-old farmer.

The Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon was a drug haven during the 1975-1990 civil war, with cannabis and opium poppy farmers generating annual returns of at least \$500 million dollars.

But in 1992, Lebanese armed forces and Syrian troops in Lebanon bowed to U.S. pressure and launched a campaign to eradicate the once-flourishing drug business.

Thousands of small farmers were forced to halt drug farming, a tradition dating back thousands of years. Even the porticos at the Roman temple of Baalbek in the ancient city of Baalbek are sculpted with wheat ears, grapes, and poppies.

"Since the end of the war, things have gone very bad. I was patient, but it is impossible to continue like this and I know dozens who like myself have decided to take the risk and revert back," to drug cultivation, Abu Ali said.

"I once had cars, a house, and my

children had food and went to school. I used to make at least \$25,000 each year," said Abu Ali, who had more than six acres of cannabis fields before halting cultivation in 1992.

Two years ago, Abu Ali went back to growing the drug on small scattered fields over a mountainous area of less than half an acre, away from Lebanese army scrutiny.

Last year, he earned \$10,000 from a harvest of seven kilos of hashish.

A foreign drugs expert told AFP that small fields were being cultivated on mountain crests across the Bekaa, particularly in the north-eastern Bekaa-Hermel district.

When farmers started back growing hashish in June 1997, a senior Bualbek municipal official summoned village mayors to warn them against returning to illegal activities, and acres of Indian hemp were destroyed.

"Misery is widespread, close to leading to famine. I know a family of six people in a hamlet that has only 300 kilos of tobacco to sell in order to survive the harsh winters in the region," said one agricultural expert.

But international pledges, mainly by the United Nations Development Program, to help finance alternative crops programs remain largely unfulfilled.

"This is a lush soil. We can have quality plantations, but there are no funds and the people at the UNDP do not even go to the fields. What

can you do with a \$1,000 loan that you have to start paying back in three months?" the expert said.

'I bought my house with hashish money'

At harvest time, Abu Ali leads a squad of farmers on foot to the heights. "We are fully-armed with rocket-propelled grenades, M16 rifles and Kalashnikov and Dushka machineguns."

Despite occasional shootouts, nothing scares off Abu Ali: "It is this or death."

But another former hashish grower, Samer, remains reluctant to resume the practice.

"I have the seeds, but my wife is against it, she is very scared," he said.

"During the war, there were bombings but there was also a lot of money. I bought my house with hashish money. For six years, the Lebanese government did nothing."

But Samer said switching to non-subsidised tobacco and potato cultivation cost him \$20,000 in 1998 alone.

"If I don't have a choice, I'll start again, and I'll be doing it for them," he said, pointing to photographs of his two children.

Soros, Sakakibara and Mahathir see dangers in 'free market fundamentalism'

PARIS (R) — George Soros, the hedge fund head who made his fortune on the financial markets, said Thursday that an "asset bubble" in countries like the United States was the next major threat to an already shaky world economy.

Soros said financial crisis over the past two years had hurt the emerging market economies while bringing major gains such as low commodity and import prices and negligible inflation to the established capitalist economies.

"So far the crisis has affected the periphery of the capitalist system negatively and the centre positively," the billionaire Hungarian-American financier said.

"Today American consumers are...spending more than they are earning. This is a wonderful world but it cannot last forever," he said via satellite link to a conference on the prospects for the global economy.

"I see the development of an asset bubble as the next major threat to the system," he said, pointing to the abrupt collapse in property and asset prices in Japan in the early 1990s, which has left the world's second largest economy fighting to pull out of recession.

Soros said that the instability and turmoil which battered economies across Asia over the last two years before striking Russia in August and swirling on to Latin America illustrated the dangers of "free market fundamentalism."

The economy had changed dramatically in the past 40 years, with the end of capital controls creating a globalised market which operated without any supra-national political guidance.

"You have political systems which are national and financial markets which are global," Soros said.

Cross-border financial organisations set up after World War II, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were no longer suited to the times and the IMF should be turned from a crisis-fighter into a crisis prevention agency, Soros said.

Countries currently turned to the IMF for help when they were already in trouble. The IMF should be allowed to act like an international central bank, with a preemptive say on economic policy in those countries which could ultimately turn to it as a lender of last resort, he said.

Sound economic policies were fundamental but there were also cases where the balance tipped in favour of lenders and against indebted countries which were in fact pursuing the right economic policy, he said.

The free market ideology did not work without guidance.

"Communism was said to have a scientific basis, with Marx. (Free) market fundamentalism also has a supposedly scientific basis. I think it is false," he said, adding the belief that markets were perfect was a "false and dangerous ideology."

In Tokyo, Japan's top financial diplomat Eisuke Sakakibara warned Friday that without reform of the international finance system, the world risked a major financial meltdown.

"I hope that in the next 10 to 20 years we could avoid both depressions and war, but there is a definite risk of world financial collapse. For that reason, reform of the international financial architecture is so important," he told a luncheon gathering with foreign journalists.

Sakakibara said he was not preaching against market forces or market mechanisms but was against a U.S.-led "market fundamentalism," where he said market forces tended to be left unchecked without guidance.

In particular he attacked the IMF's policy prescriptions for countries in financial turmoil, saying that, for example, the imposition of high interest rates in Indonesia had not been a good idea.

Crisis after crisis could result in a major meltdown of the world financial system, he said, but added that he thought such a meltdown could be avoided. To that end, a mechanism to stabilise financial markets was needed, he said.

He also challenged economists that say currency depreciation would eventually restore market equilibrium in crisis-hit nations and said that in many cases, such a move had led a freefall in the exchange rate.

"I am very interested to observe what will happen to Brazil in the coming weeks," he added.

Brazil, plunged into crisis by a huge loss in investor confidence over worries about its fiscal reform plans, announced on Monday that it would float its currency. As of Thursday, the real had shed 30 per cent since last week.

Sakakibara, Japan's vice finance minister for international affairs, also said floating an exchange rate in a crisis could lead to a collapse of foreign exchange transactions and the same applied to letting interest rates rise to defend exchange rates.

His speech followed one by Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa in December where Miyazawa called for "managed flexibility" between the yen, the euro and the U.S. dollar, which has been interpreted by some as suggesting currency target zones.

But Sakakibara said Japan did not necessarily support the idea.

"We will certainly discuss this...but at this moment our position is not that of support for target zones," he said.

Sakakibara said authorities needed to approach markets with the aim of enhancing competition and not the promotion of unlimited freedom.

"Global capitalism needs to be restrained in its cross-border transactions, be it through disclosure, supervisory and prudential regulations, or outright controls," he said.

He called for "systemic diversity" in the world's financial system that respected social and political differences.

Sakakibara also predicted that what he called the regime of laissez faire or market fundamentalism dominated by the United States in the 1980s and 1990s would not continue into the 21st century.

U.S. dominance, political and economic, was declining, he said, citing the unification of Europe and instability in global capitalism.

But he acknowledged that a waning of U.S. influence could reduce the degree of coordination between nations that currently exists.

In Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad urged Malaysians Friday to get ready for a world depression and face the challenges of globalisation by being more self-reliant and cautious to new ideas.

"When the bubble bursts, we cannot help but be affected. So our problems are far from over," he told a dinner marking the 30th anniversary of American International Assurance Co. Ltd. (AIA).

"We must be prepared for possible worldwide deflation. They say it would not happen. But they have been wrong many times before. And they can be wrong again," he said.

"Since there is a high possibility of a worldwide depression affecting us in the future, we must insure against it," he added, urging Malaysians to maintain

their relatively high level of savings.

Mahathir also warned of other challenges such as globalisation, adding Malaysians were not preparing for related problems — such as the creation of huge banks, manufacturers and utilities through global mergers and acquisitions.

"Their intention is to monopolise the field that they are in," he said, calling for regulations to prevent smaller companies in developing countries from being "swallowed up" and "sat upon and squashed" in the process.

"We should welcome globalisation but we must ensure it will not be open to abuse," Mahathir said. "In this very challenging 'fin de siècle' environment, Malaysians must learn to rely more and more on themselves. We must be cautious when accepting something new as proposed by others."

Mahathir said global giants seemed to be "preparing for a world invasion, for worldwide monopolies, for economic hegemony," accusing them of using the IMF to "prize open our markets to pick up things on the cheap."

"Don't accuse us of cynicism if we try to protect our people from these predatory giants," he added. "We do not fight for independence only to be trampled under and made worker bees to foreign queens."

Standard and Poor's Long way to go for crisis-hit Asia

HONG KONG (AFP) — Financial reforms in Asia are starting to bear fruit, but much still remains to be done to extricate the region from crisis and win back investors, credit assessor Standard and Poor's (S & P's) said Thursday.

"We have finally started to see the benefits of governmental reforms in some countries, but a lot more work is needed to get these banking systems back on track," the U.S.-based agency's head Ernest Napier said.

"We've had one more year for the banks to identify the extent of their bad loans, and I think most of them are pretty much on top of this situation," he told a news conference here.

"What they have to do now is to find ways in which they can accelerate the disposal of problem loans, and that's going to require a lot of outside funding, either from the government, or from other sources," he said.

In countries where the reform process has yet to gather momentum "the recovery process will be very protracted," warned S & P's managing director in Asia, Cecile Saavedra.

"We expect that investor confidence in the Asian region will return sooner if international investors recognise the commitment to reforms is proceeding," she told the news conference.

Napier called for consolidation among Asia's troubled banks, saying some had only "reluctantly gone ahead" last year with mergers to stay alive.

"But I think more banks are going to come to the conclusion that this is the only reasonable alternative," he said.

"Obviously mergers between two weak banks isn't necessarily the panacea for saving the banking sector. I think governments are going to step in more often as they realise that the banks can't do it by themselves; they need more government support, and the regulators are going to increasingly dictate the terms of bank

mergers," he added.

Robert Richards, Standard and Poor's managing director for corporate finance in Asia, warned the region to steer clear of cosy relationships between banks and companies which he indicated had undone Japan.

"For creditors, better objective analysis must replace reputation and relationship-based credit decisions," he said.

The outlook for infrastructure development in the region remains mixed reflecting the economic situation in the countries concerned, said Paul Coughlin, head of infrastructure finance in Asia for the agency.

"While Thailand and (South) Korea are showing signs of revival, Indonesia remains fragile," he said.

"Problems in the Japanese banking sector will continue to have a negative impact as it withdraws credit from the region. Indications are that China's slowdown is bottoming out, though liquidity difficulties for the Chinese investment trusts and 'red-chip' companies should persist," Coughlin said.

The reform driven in Thailand and South Korea, which is trying to slim down the bloated business empires of its top conglomerates or chaebol, were headed in the right direction, he added.

"Korea has followed a bold reform programme, and the progress has been encouraging. Nevertheless, concrete evidence of chaebol agreed to last year, has not materialised," he said.

"In Thailand, meanwhile, some steps toward stabilising the banking sector have appeared, but we still have not seen meaningful improvement in key economic indicators. For both countries, and indeed for many other economies in Asia, clear commitments to reform — backed up by measurable results — are prerequisites for winning back skittish investors," he concluded.

Brazil's currency slide sparks worldwide woes

SAO PAULO (R) — Brazil had world markets on red alert again on Friday as the value of its newly floated currency fell precipitously and fuelled fears of domino-like devaluations from Latin America to Asia.

Neighbouring Argentina moved quickly to stem contagion with a surprise announcement late on Thursday that it was proposing a radical monetary treaty with the United States to adopt the dollar and eliminate all risk of a devaluation like Brazil's.

That put the speculative spotlight on Hong Kong, which like Argentina, runs on a U.S. dollar peg, and on China. Hong Kong stocks

closed 3.1 per cent lower on Brazil's currency woes and concerns of speculative attacks on the Hong Kong dollar, analysts said.

Uncertainty over Brazil — the world's eighth largest economy — snowballed after the real tumbled 7.6 per cent on Thursday to an all-time low of 1.72 per dollar, stretching the loss to almost 30 per cent since the country abandoned its strong-currency policy 10 days ago.

Dollars outflows, which forced Brazil to free float the currency a week ago, showed no signs of waning and left the private banks' dollar stock empty.

The lack of dollar liquidity

combined with rumours of deep losses in some funds with the real's slide left Latin American stock markets in tatters and the U.S. market trembling.

"The key factor to my mind is the central bank has to step up to the plate and slow things down," said Alan Ruskin, head of research at the 4Cast consulting firm in New York. "If the currency continues to devalue at a rate anything like what we've seen lately, inflation could pick up sharply, forcing interest rates even higher," he added.

Higher rates fuel speculation that Brazil, like the last emerging market currency

victim Russia, will have problems paying its debts, raising the specter of a potential restructuring of domestic debt.

"Brazil's sovereign creditworthiness has taken a turn for the worse," wrote Carl Ross, analyst at Bear Stearns & Co.

The government's own projections put debt cost at 7.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) assuming an average interest rate of 22 per cent.

But the central bank's official lending rate is now nearly twice that, at 41 per cent after an increase on Tuesday, although the banks continue to borrow for now from the

central bank in the money market at 33 per cent.

Finance Minister Pedro Malan returned to Brasilia on Thursday from five days of meetings with officials and bankers in Washington and New York only to find the markets reeling.

His trip was meant to bolster support for Brazil's sudden switch in exchange policy.

Globo TV said the minister was meeting with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso late into the evening, but refused to comment on government efforts to calm the markets.

The central bank reiterated on Thursday it would let the

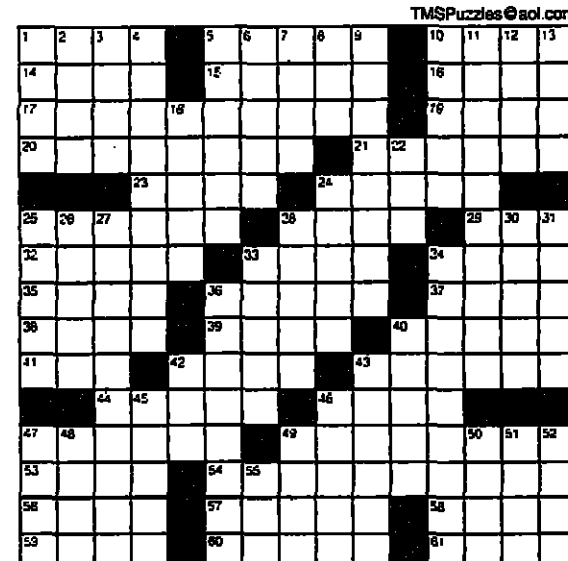
market decide the value of the real. "There is intention of intervening and I am unaware of any intention in that respect," said Altamir Lopes, the head of its economics department.

Brazil's newspapers splashed the real's slide across their front pages and questioned the central bank's decision not to pump dollars into the market.

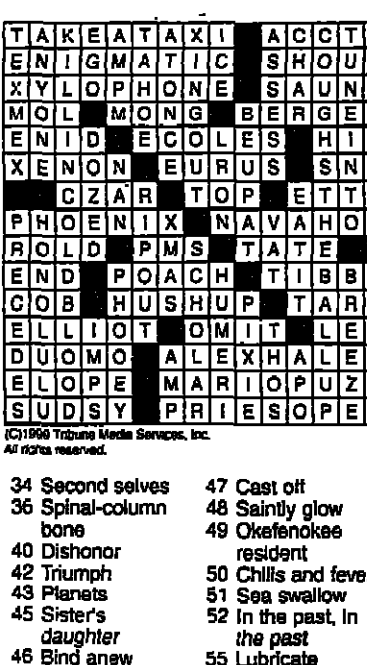
"The risk is that the central bank transforms a squeeze in liquidity into a stimulus to run for dollars and a disastrous and exaggerated devaluation of the real," the Folha de S. Paulo said in its lead editorial.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

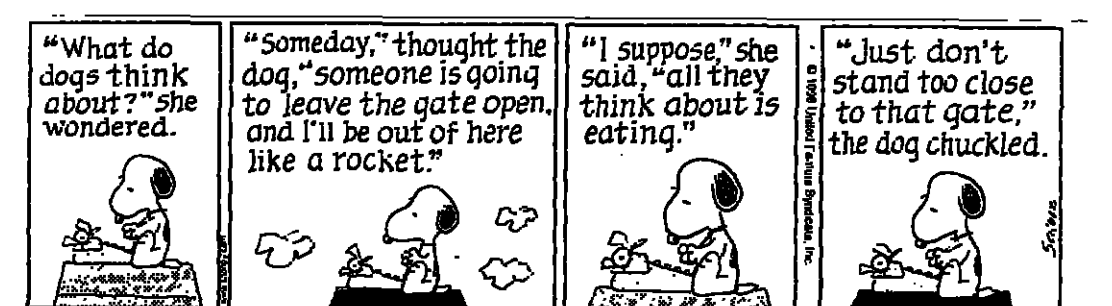
- ACROSS
- Swimming hole
 - Britain's Derby
 - Downs
 - Glance over
 - Follow orders
 - Barter
 - Manner of speaking
 - Reverend's quarry
 - Marital
 - Impose a punishment
 - Metal lure
 - Nutmeg spice
 - Tripod for art
 - Behavior patterns
 - Rotation line
 - Not up to snuff
 - Fill with high spirits
 - Criscross framework
 - Turquoise
 - Sacred ceremony
 - Sleeveless
 - Good fortune
 - Cries of contempt
 - Son of Seth
 - Shop
 - Past airplane, briefly
 - Architect of St. Paul's
 - "Poppa?"
 - Modular elements
 - Laugh heartily
 - Texas border river
 - Pass through
 - Very large
 - Reverend's quarry
 - Actor Robert
 - Unending
 - Belonging to us
 - Hamlet, e.g.
 - Lotion additives
 - E-mailed
- DOWN
- Magnificence
 - Double-read instrument
 - Deion's nickname
 - Blows up
 - Scruples
 - Winner's reward
 - Of sound mind
 - Lyric poem
 - Legendary sea creatures
 - Enact
 - Illegal spirits
 - Poker pot
 - Bird abode
 - Poster of candidates
 - Beast of burden
 - Goes out
 - Seasoning agents
 - Also known as
 - Illegal spirits
 - Pyromaniac's crime
 - Money
 - Huron and Erie
 - Tierney and Autry
 - Second selves
 - Spinal-column bone
 - Dishonor
 - Triumph
 - Planets
 - Sister's daughter
 - Bind anew
 - Cast off
 - Saintly glow
 - Okefenokee
 - Chills and fever
 - Sea swallow
 - In the past, in the past
 - Lubricate



By James E. Buel
Fort Washington, MD



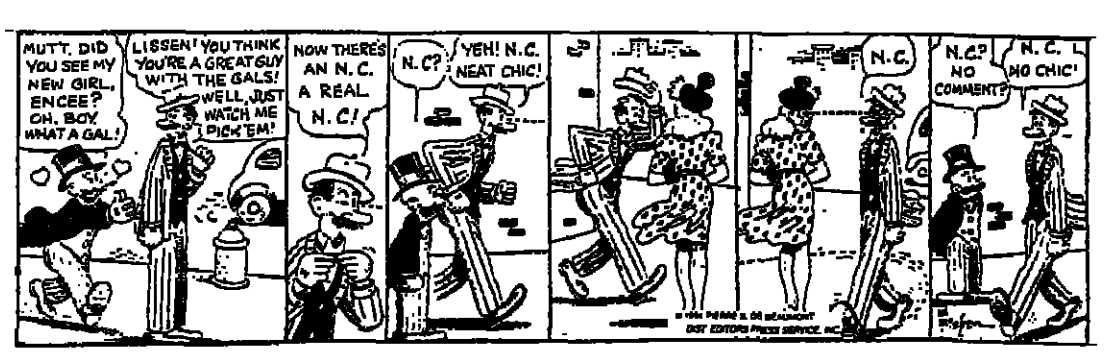
Peanuts



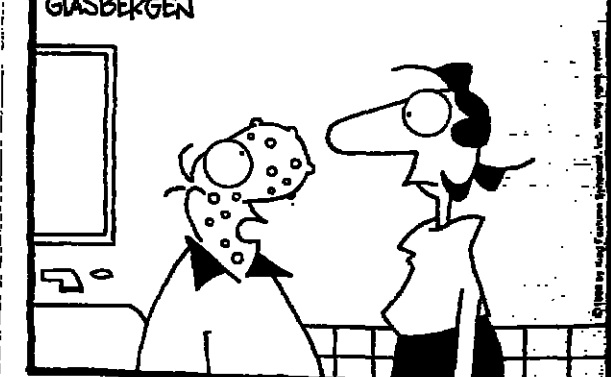
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

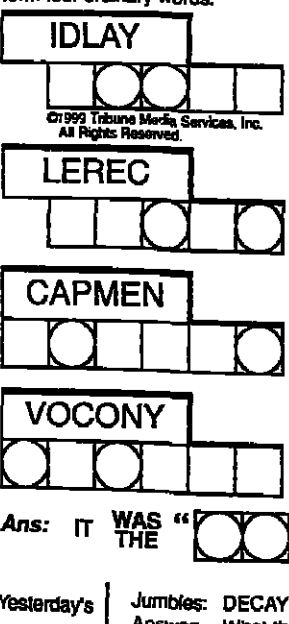


THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arghenti



Busin
De
A rev
Research
support te.
HOF
FORECAST FOR
B. D. A. Black
ARIES
TAURUS
GEMINI
CANCER
LEO
VIRGO
LIBRA
SCORPIO
SAGITTARIUS
CAPRICORN
AQUARIUS
PISCES
Birthstone of

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Researcher urges immediate action to support textile industry, put it on right track

**** ACCORDING TO** a fresh study prepared by Thuraya Sali about the Jordanian textile industry and its competitiveness, immediate action is necessary to support this sector and place it on the right track as the textile industry is passing through a difficult situation that threatens its future. Sali, who works as a researcher at the Ministry of Planning said the sector should choose between two international trends in manufacturing clothes.

The first is to depend on cheap, specialised labour as the case has and continues to be in Korea while the second trend is the Italian example, which focused on designs, and the competitive groups which require high quality and which invested in international trademarks.

Sali said the sector comprises small, medium and large industries noting that most of them, or 1,500 entities are small workshops employing 4,600 labourers or 60 per cent of the overall labour in the textile sector. Medium industries comprised 39 entities which employed between 200 and 300 labourers or 26 per cent of the total number of textile workers. The remaining 18 per cent or 1,500 workers are employed by the Kingdom's two large textile firms which depend totally on exports.

The researcher indicated that the small and medium size plants depend wholly on the local market as an outlet for their goods noting that marketing is weak among these two groups which operate at 50 per cent of production capacity.

She called for investment in training labourers, preparing designs, concentrating on promotion and meeting the demands quickly so that the textile industry can advance. She stressed that efforts in this respect should take place within seven years before new forces start emerging in the marketing process and before competition sharpens as a result of implementing the free trade agreement.

Meanwhile, the general association of textile plant owners said in a memorandum to the minister of industry and trade that most of the second hand or used clothes imported to the Kingdom are new. The memorandum said if imports of used clothes cannot be stopped, at least the imported goods should be verified to the used clothes and not new.

The general association said the textile sector in Jordan is facing big problems in the areas of marketing and exporting to Iraq and the Palestinian territories because of the Israeli barriers. Further, the sector does not benefit much of the trade protocols and economic agreements with friendly countries, the memorandum said.

It pointed out also that the textile sector faces big problems in dealings with the civil and military consumer corporation which require a bank guarantee and which returns the unsold goods to the manufacturers after a period of five years (Al Dustour).

King's return seen reflecting positively on the stock market

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Turnover of shares at the Amman Financial Market declined in the past week as a result of the 'Eid Al Fitr holidays' that marked the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan, a broker said Friday.

Naim Nageeb said that the return of His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday after a six-month absence to undergo chemotherapy would reflect positively on the stock market.

"His Majesty's return, coupled with positive signs about primary results of the listed companies on the stock market, will push the share prices up in the coming few days," Nageeb told the Jordan Times.

"The information obtained from some companies shows that the pharmaceutical and mining firms have recorded good results in the past year and that will bring good news to the stock market," he said.

The weekly bulletin showed that turnover amounted to JD1.1 million compared to JD8.9 million in the previous week. The price index recorded in the past week was 176.03 points.

Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing ranked first

among the listed firms with a turnover amounting to JD247,827 followed by the Arab Phosphate Mining with a turnover of JD185,685.

The industrial sector won the lion's share with JD714,124 followed by the banking sector which registered a turnover of JD241,848.

Nageeb said that banks' share prices were "stable" amid weak demand for these shares.

The weekly bulletin showed that the Housing Bank ranked first among the nine banks whose shares changed hands in the stock market with a turnover amounting to JD95,285.

He added that investors' "appetite" for banks shares will depend on the 1998 results "which are expected to appear in the next few weeks."

The parallel market share amounted to JD47,014, where the bulk of this figure was recorded by the Export and Financing Bank and Union Tobacco.

Lebanon eyes shipping business with Gulf

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon is redrawing its transport plans in anticipation of a radical increase in business with the Gulf, Transport Minister Najib Mikati told Reuters in an interview Friday.

"We want to restore Beirut as the gate for transit shipments in the Middle East," said Mikati, who assumed the transport and public works portfolios in the government formed last month by Prime Minister Selim Hoss.

"A boost in the container activity in Beirut is encouraging us to plan a railway linking Lebanon to Dubai via Syria," he added without elaborating. A Middle East rail network built by Western colonial powers earlier this century is now largely abandoned.

At present containers are carried by truck from

Lebanon to the Gulf in around four days compared to seven days by ships that go through the Suez Canal.

Shipping lines began to show more interest in Lebanon after a consortium including Dubai Port Authority won a \$60 million concession late last year to market and upgrade Beirut port, including adding a new container terminal.

The project is scheduled to come on stream in 2000. The Dubai Port Authority will handle the container business until the year 2020.

Mikati expects the number of containers heading to Dubai via Beirut to rise to one million in 2001 from around 280,000 at present.

"The professionals from Dubai have the expertise and marketing capability. They can also convince

companies they already deal with to ship through Beirut," he told Reuters.

The minister said the project will boost Beirut port's revenue, which was around \$75 million in 1998.

The Lebanese government receives 70 per cent of the revenue under the new arrangement with the Group for Developing Lebanese Harbours. The Beirut port charges around \$270 on each container, including \$85 for unloading.

The bulk of goods arriving in Lebanon enter at Beirut port, which handled 2.8 million tonnes of cargo in the first half of 1998, compared to 5.8 million tonnes for all of 1997 and 6.7 million in 1996.

Lebanon has three smaller ports in Sidon, Tripoli and Tyre.

Gold unlikely to regain price glitter in short-term

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Gold is unlikely to regain its former glitter in terms of price this year, according to commodity research company Gold Fields Mineral Services (GFMS) in a report released this month.

The assessment follows a disappointing 1998 in which the precious metal traded at an average of \$294 an ounce, its lowest level for 20 years.

"That gold performed so poorly was ascribed to the fact it was increasingly behaving like any other commodity, and that its role as a hedge against inflation and uncertainty was diminished," the GFMS report said.

The GFMS report said of gold's 1998 performance.

The London-based GFMS said gold was expected to remain in a \$270-\$310 an ounce band in the first half of 1999.

"We can envisage circumstances which could see gold break above \$310, although we do not think them particularly probable," GFMS Managing Director Philip Klapwijk said.

"For instance, a serious threat to global stability, possibly triggered by a collapse in world stock markets — arguably they have far more downside potential than upside —

combined with a large fall in the dollar, could stimulate buying interest from individual investors as well as from the funds," he added.

"We believe that unless there is an important shift in producer attitudes to the price, hedging will act to constrain any sustained break-out above \$310," Klapwijk emphasised.

GFMS said there was a possibility of further devaluations in major consuming countries like India and China, causing a sharp fall in demand and potential for net supply from scrap.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Looks like you're going to make points with somebody who thinks you're pretty cute. But if you get too cocky you could clash with an older person. That would be uncomfortable for everybody, so try to keep it low key. You don't really have to defend your turf. Everybody can see that you're in charge, so treat others with respect.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You might still be feeling a little antsy. Something needs to be done, and you've put it off long enough. This most likely has to do with your home. You have a few things in mind that you'd like to change. You're getting advice from friends, who know how to do what you're about to attempt. Get them to help you with it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your energy level is huge again today. Whatever anybody comes up with, you'll be game to give it a go, and you'll probably be successful. When you get like this, you're amazing — agile, vivacious and charming. You might have a tendency to dance a little too close to the edge, though. Don't overdo it. Take safety precautions!

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) Looks like you're in the mood to take a drive, but your partner has other plans for you, such as a household project. If you're going to make your escape, do it early. Then all you have to do is plan out your schedule so that most of the hard stuff is done by the time you get back home. Just kidding! You're always eager to help.

LEO: (July 23 to August 23) Your buddies want you to come and play, but somebody else wants you to stay home and take care of important matters. How important can they be? If they've gone this long, they can go a little longer. Do your best to keep the worry wart happy and make an appointment to mend fences later.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) You might be able to pay off a big bill today. That's amazing, considering you probably went shopping yesterday. You're so careful with your money, it's quite possible you can afford everything you bought. Anybody else would have gone deeply into debt, but not you. So go ahead and write the check.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) A controversial subject could come up today, concerning money, work, home or family. For example, somebody might imply that you're working too hard for too little money, and not spending enough time with your family. Don't get defensive. Just listen to what your adversary has to say, and thank him or her for sharing.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) You and your co-workers will be able to do even the most awesome task in half the time, if you can keep from bickering. When energy levels run this high, sparks can fly. If there's a disagreement about how to do a particular job, compromise. Someone else's ideas may actually be better than yours, so at least consider them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The urge to travel is even stronger today. What are you waiting for? It may be your playmate who's stalling. Be patient. Once he or she has settled a problem at home, you'll be off and running. Hopefully a phone call will be enough to do it. If tempers flare, your job is to keep things as light as possible.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) If you're having people over to your house tonight, be prepared for a noisy crowd. Invite all the neighbours so they won't complain. If they're in the middle of the boisterous activity, they'll find it much more enjoyable. The same goes for you, by the way. Don't stand on the sidelines. Get involved and have a great time.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) The insights you've been having lately are getting to the truth. You may be discovering things that are slightly disturbing. Do the ends justify the means? Is everything logical or do some things happen by chance? These and other interesting subjects will be bubbling up from your subconscious as secrets continue to be revealed.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) People will like pretty things are in the mood to buy today. If you're not an artist, maybe you should be. Pisces is a very creative sign. You have a greater than average sensitivity to colour and the energy it produces. So if you don't have anybody else's beautiful art objects to sell, you could start by whipping up a few of your own.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Dead Sea pollution put down to natural causes

AMMAN (J.T.) — High levels of an ozone-depleting chemical found in the atmosphere around the Dead Sea cannot be blamed on local chemical works, a team of researchers from Israel and Germany has discovered.

The factories, which produce bromine compounds and other chemicals from Dead Sea salt, have been linked with high levels of bromine oxide (BrO), a potent ozone-depletor. But the scientists say that the chemical is produced in a natural reaction in the salt pans around the edge of the landlocked sea.

Jordanian and Israeli chemical firms will welcome the conclusion, but the research does not completely absolve humans: the salt pans are growing ever larger as more freshwater is removed from the River Jordan before it reaches the Dead Sea.

The researchers made their discovery in a mobile laboratory parked on a dam between the northern and southern sections of the sea, with open water to the north and salt pans to the south. Levels of BrO were at their

highest — and ozone levels were lowest — when the wind was blowing from the south.

Although there are chemical works south of the dam, the researchers rule them out as the source of the BrO. Fluctuations in BrO levels do not correspond with levels of other industrial pollutants from the factories, they point out. The distribution of the BrO also suggests that it originates over a wide area rather than at localised points.

BrO is probably produced by oxidation of salts on the surface of the pans, the researchers say, but the exact mechanism remains a mystery. Geochemists know that the chemical is also released from the surface of freezing seawater in the Arctic. "Whether the same bromine release processes as in the Arctic occur at the Dead Sea is not clear," the team writes.

Nevertheless, the researchers say the discovery kills the hypothesis that BrO is only released from sea salt under freezing conditions. Daytime temperatures at the Dead Sea typically reach 40°C.

Delta reports record 1998 profits

NEW YORK (AFP) — Delta Air Lines has said it posted a \$190 million profit for the fourth quarter, bringing its full-year earnings for 1998 to a record \$1.078 billion.

Rival airline Northwest meanwhile said it lost \$181 million in the three-month period ending Dec. 31.

Delta profits, amounting to \$1.29 per share for the quarter, were up slightly from the same period a year earlier at \$1.20 per share of \$190 million. Revenues were \$3.448 billion, unchanged from a year ago.

For all of 1998, Delta's profits were up 15.4 per cent and sales were up 3.2 per cent to \$14.4 billion.

Northwest said its quarterly earnings were impacted by a strike that cost an estimated \$300 million.

The results also included a charge of \$66 million to retire seven Boeing 747s and to renegotiate its labour agreement.

For all of 1998, northwest lost \$280 million, including special charges. Revenues for the quarterly were \$2.2 billion and \$10.2 billion for all of 1998, both figures off about 11 per cent.

Lego to shed 1,000 jobs

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Lego, which makes plastic building bricks for children, is to shed up to 1,000 jobs or 10 per cent of jobs in its business throughout the world, director Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen said in the internal company newspaper Inform. He also said that Lego had to improve its annual results by one billion kroner (134 million euros) by slimming down its operations.

Restructuring would affect mainly people involved in sales, marketing and in the finance department. The company is to publish results in April which are expected to show the first loss since the 1930s. The group employs 10,000 people of whom 1,000 work in Denmark.

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

Many villas and apartments for rent and sale
Furnished & Unfurnished
For more information call:
Abdoun Real Estate
5920605/5920609/079533007
Web Site is
www.abdoun.com.jo

STUDIO HAIG
Professional quality in 1 hour service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:
* JUMBO photo size 30% larger.
* Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm.
Shmelsani - Opposite Grindlays Bank.
Phone: 5604042
Sweifeh Tel: 822891

Your Address In Amman
CRYSTAL
Quality Serviced Suites
* One & Two Bedrooms * Fully Equipped Kitchens * Daily & Long Stay * Reasonable Rates
5th Circle
Tel: 5692672 - Fax: 5674551
e-mail: crystal@go.com.jo

FOR RENT
Deluxe Villas and Apartments
SANABEL
Real Estate
SWEIFYEH
A. Hajarat Complex
Tel: 5864230 - 5865167
Mobile: 079/537588

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL
5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42
&
Fax: 5693337

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL
5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42
&
Fax: 5693337

Bayerischer Hof
German Restaurant
LUNCH: 12:30p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
DINNER: 6:30p.m. - 11:30 p.m.
* German coffee and cakes served all day
Sweifeh - Al Hamra Street Tel: 5819730 / 5810811
PO Box 6555, Amman-11118 Jordan

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL
5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42
&
Fax: 5693337

Amra Forum Hotel
At 6th Circle Tel.: 5510001
Shehrazad Restaurant
Great View - Overlooking Amman
Enjoy outstanding Mezza and live music.
your Friendly Host

Rafter out as seeds blown away at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AFP) — U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter and five other seeds were blown away on a blustery day at the Australian Open tennis championships here Friday.

Rafter's hopes of becoming the first Australian champion since Mark Edmondson in 1976 were dashed by the strong Swedish forehand of Thomas Enqvist.

Swedish players like Melbourne — they have contested seven of the last 16 finals — and Enqvist shortened his odds with a hugely impressive display, winning in four sets.

But he now comes up against the power-serving of Mark Philippoussis, the 14th seeded Australian.

Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna, the women's third seed, Tim Henman, the men's No. 6, Spanish ninth seed Conchita Martinez, 15th seed Natasha Zvereva of Belarus and ninth men's seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands were all swept away.

Spain's Maria Antonia Sanchez Lorenzo, the World No. 65, who had never progressed beyond the second round of a Grand Slam, humiliated Novotna 6-3, 6-0 in 51 minutes.

Henman's softball tactics against Marc Rosset backfired totally as the Swiss rolled him out in straight sets.

The departure of Rafter, Henman and Krajicek meant only five men's seeds were left in the tournament and No. 5 Andre Agassi of the United States was the highest ranked player left.

South African Wayne Ferreira came from two sets down to dump Krajicek out of the tournament in the night match.

Ferreira, a semi-finalist here seven years ago, clawed back from losing the opening two sets in tiebreakers to oust the former Wimbledon champion, 6-7 (1/7), 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 in three hours 19 minutes and reach the last 16 in the tournament.

Ferreira now plays the Slovak Republic's seventh seed Karol Kucera in the fourth round on Sunday.

Emilie Loit, ranked 95th in the world, knocked Martinez out 7-5, 6-1 and now plays another 19-year-old and fellow Frenchwoman Amelie Mauresmo in the



Thomas Enqvist of Sweden reacts near the end of his victory by 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 over Australian Patrick Rafter at the Australian Open Tennis Championships in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, (AP photo)

fourth round.

Novotna was at a loss for words after her defeat to Spain's Sanchez Lorenzo.

"I don't know what went wrong. I'm in a state of shock," said the 30-year-old who choked at two Wimbledon finals before winning at the third attempt last year.

"It was a nightmare, a total disaster. I couldn't put the ball over the net. I was horrible and I have no explanation whatsoever," she added.

Novotna, a finalist here in 1991, when she lost to Monica Seles, but an early-round loser on three of her next four attempts, had missed the Australian Open in the past three years because she felt the season was too demanding.

But while Novotna was left ruing her loss of form, hometown boy Philippoussis was giving his fans something to cheer about with a disciplined performance to advance to the last 16.

Philippoussis, whose new girlfriend has clamped down on his night clubbing and cut out junk food, looked meaner and tougher as he dug in to edge Slovak Jan Krosak, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1, in just under two hours on centre court to set up a mouthwatering battle with Sweden's Enqvist.

Philippoussis or Enqvist could face Karol Kucera of Slovakia in the semi-finals.

The 24-year-old Kucera tamed Marat Safin 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 as the Russian teenager lost control in the windy conditions.

Safin could do little right against the Kucera groundstrokes Friday. Norwegian Christian Ruud was another player who admitted he had made it too easy for his opponent.

Ruud, who beat second seed Alex Corretja of Spain in the previous round, could find no way past the tough little Romanian-born Andrew Ilie of Australia who won 6-2, 6-2, 6-4.

"I probably made it a little bit easy for him some times," the Norwegian said afterwards. "If I had hit deeper and heavier he might have had more problems."

Elsewhere it was business as usual for Venus Williams, who swept into the fourth round after a straight sets win

over Romania's Ruxandra Dragomir. The fifth-seeded 18-year-old Californian packed too much punch for the World No.38 and won 6-3, 6-4.

Davenport in the quarter-finals, if she overcome's compatriot Chanda Rubin in the next round.

Davenport saw off Karina Habsudova



Australia's Mark Philippoussis who is nicknamed "The Scud" thunders down a serve in his 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1, win over Jan Krosak of Slovakia at the Australian Open Tennis Championships, Melbourne, Australia (AP photo)

"I didn't have to work hard," said of Slovakia, who gave her a hard time Williams, who is seeded to meet here last year, in straight sets.

Kournikova has a classic case of 'choking'

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Anna Kournikova has a classic case of "choking", a leading sports psychologist said Friday.

And the most she can hope for at the Australian Open is to battle on as best she can, take her money and get back on the practice court.

"She choked and she was probably unaware of what was happening," said New South Wales Institute of Sport psychologist John Crampton, explaining that choking was "when your body won't let you do what you want it to do".

His comments follow Kournikova's 31 double faults Thursday, a record at the Australian Open, in a second round match against Japan's Miho Saeki which the Russian eventually won.

She has now served 175 doubles in eight matches. That equates to almost five games each match when an opponent isn't even required to make a swing at the ball.

The pin-up girl serves fine in practice and is in reasonable shape in most departments of the game, particularly her awesome forehand.

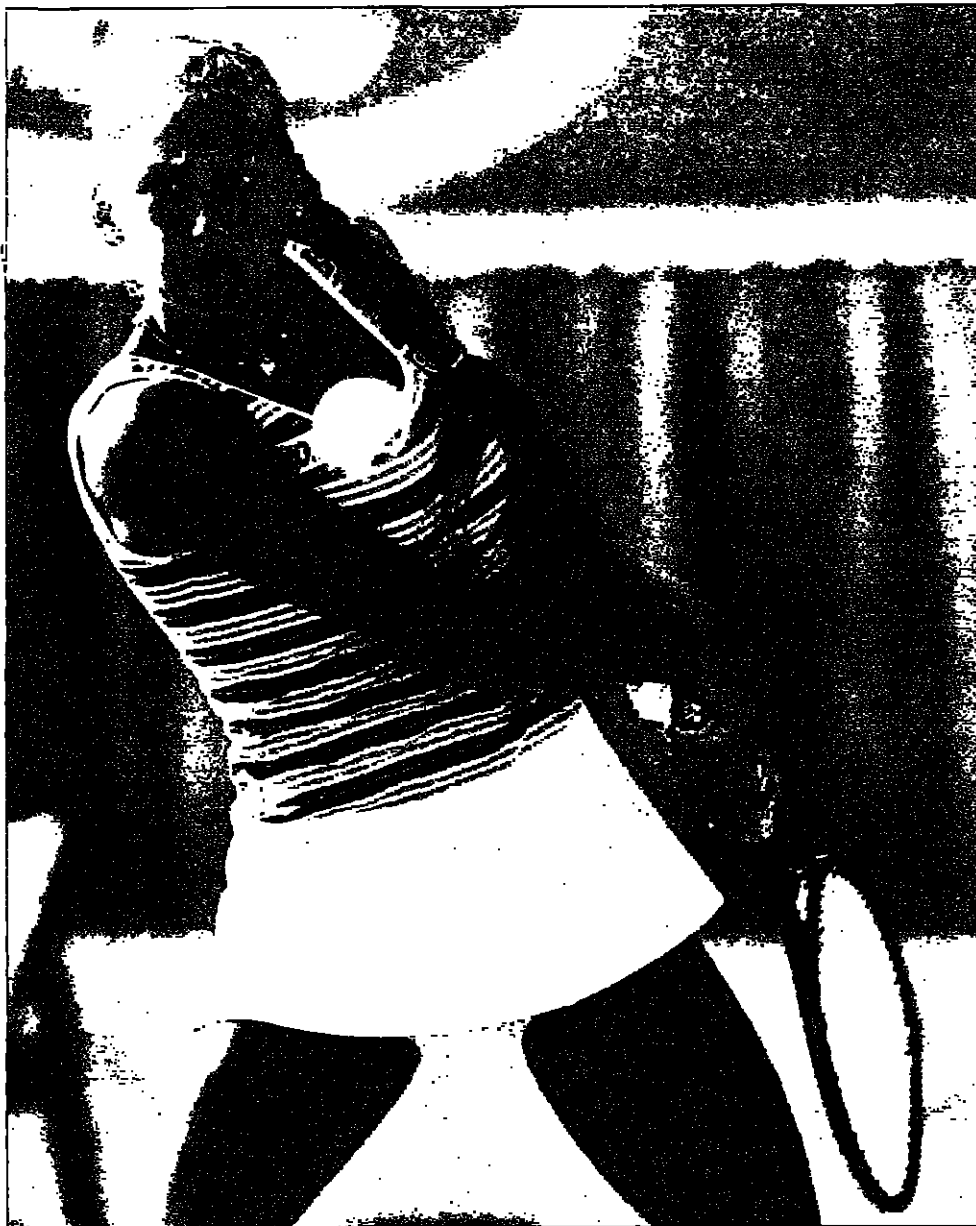
But when she steps up to serve under pressure, her game falls apart.

"There is no way Kournikova could have got to her level in tennis and gained that ranking with a bad serve," Crampton said.

He said choking involved tension levels increasing in the upper body, particularly the biceps and triceps, and was common in elite sports.

Surprisingly, he said relaxing was not the way to deal with the problem "because there's too much pressure at that level" but instead to build extra pressure into training sessions so she can learn to cope.

Crampton said the bronzed 17-year-old also had the added pressure of public expectations, mostly because of her stunning



Anna Kournikova

good looks.

"At that age most people are very self conscious, you'd have to be sensitive," he said.

"She's got the looks and when she's playing well she's probably comfortable with that attention but when she's struggling it would make things harder for her."

"With that much tension you

can do some pretty weird and wonderful things like she's doing."

Crampton said it was possible Kournikova had been practising a new service technique prior to the Australian Open which fell apart once the pressure was on.

"It's often said that the last thing learned is the first thing forgotten," he noted.

Kournikova admits the serve has been bothering her since the end of last year, but flippantly pushes aside the dilemma.

"If I get upset it's only going to get worse," she said.

She meets Germany's Andrea Glass in the third round on Saturday with a fourth round clash against seventh seed Mary Pierce on the cards.

Australian Open diary

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Australian Open briefs on Friday:

Crack Indian pair Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi have a novel way of expressing their "high-fives" during doubles matches.

The top seeds bump into each other with their chests like warring antelope to celebrate big moments in their matches.

Fans will be seeing more of their on-court pectoral collusions after their second round win over Americans, Doug Flach and Mark Merklein, in their bid to win a Grand Slam title.

Young Russian Marat Safin won the "dummyspinner" award hands down after his spirited third round loss to seventh seed Karol Kucera.

Safin's frustrations reached flashpoint when his rocket serve was broken a fourth time and the 18-year-old Muscovite gave a spectacular display of penulthood which rendered one of his rackets useless.

He slammed it into the court three times, buckling the frame to gasps from the crowd, and earning a code violation warning from Swedish chair umpire Lars Graff and a subsequent 500 US dollar fine.

Memories of last year's Swiss Air flight which crashed in Nova Scotia cut deep for former Barcelona Olympic gold medalist Marc Rosset.

He was booked on the flight with his coach Pierre Simolo, but decided at the last-minute to stay and practice instead.

He was asked about his brush with death soon after eliminating British sixth seed Tim Henman from the Australian Open.

"I have nothing to say about

this... I don't want to talk about that. That's it," he said. Should have known better ... Monica Seles, who has yet to lose at the Australian Open, went to the movies the other night, alone.

But it wasn't long before she was recognised and was mobbed by fans. Monica was forced to bear a hasty retreat back to the sanctuary of her hotel room, muttering never again.

"I don't go out alone," she says. "I tried that once, boy oh boy, wrong idea. It didn't work and it was a quick turnaround and back to the room."

The Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, are so enraptured by Pete Sampras they considered pulling out of the Australian Open after he decided not to play. Asked who her favourite men's player was, Venus answered "Pete" so quickly the journalist was cut off mid-sentence.

"Serena and I, we absolutely love the way he plays," she said. "We hope one day to be like him... ummm."

Romanian-born Australian Andrew Ilie wants to let everyone know where his allegiances lie.

After he hammered Christian Ruud on court one, he grabbed an Australian flag and did a lap of honour.

"It was spontaneous," he said. "Every player dreams to play well at home and do well and lives for that moment at the end of the match when the crowd is right behind them, he realises that he's almost reaching for his dreams."

Bubbly world No. 2, Martina Hingis has been spotted happily rollerblading along the picturesque St. Kilda beachside foreshore.

Drugs ban would not stop Korda taking title



Petr Korda

MELBOURNE (AFP) — If Petr Korda retains his Australian Open crown he may be able to keep it even if subsequently suspended over his positive drug test.

International Tennis Federation (ITF) communications manager Alun James confirmed that, if suspended, Korda would automatically be stripped of all ranking points and the \$454,430 in prizemoney he has won since he tested positive to an anabolic steroid at Wimbledon last year.

But the fate of any title won in the meantime is not so clear cut.

Korda has not won a title on the ATP Tour since failing his Wimbledon dope test but the possibility of regaining his Open title grows with every match at Melbourne Park where he is now down to the last 16.

James said: "The ruling is that it's up to individual Grand Slams, should there be such a situation, to decide on who receives the title."

"It's up to the tournament to decide if Korda still retains the title, the runner-up receives it or it's left vacant."

The ITF is appealing to the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) against its own independent appeals committee's decision not to impose a suspension on Korda following his positive test.

James said any subsequent suspension would take effect from the day it was handed down but Korda would also lose prizemoney, ranking points and titles accumulated since July.

Korda has so far been stripped of his Wimbledon ranking points and prize-money but escaped suspension when the ITF's independent appeals committee ruled there were "exceptional circumstances" in his case.

The ITF's appeal to CAS will claim the committee misapplied the exceptional circumstances rule.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:463-4144

PHILADELPHIA '1'

Bruce Willis .. in

MERCURY RISING

Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30

CINEMA TEL:463-4144

PHILADELPHIA '2'

Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shihawi .. in

ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR

Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30

CINEMA TEL:5699238

PLAZA

Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in

ALABANDA & SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Shows: 8:30, 1:15, 3:30, 11:30 Shows: 10:45

CINEMA TEL:5677420

CONCORDE

Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shihawi .. in

ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR

Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:5934793

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria

Mel Gibson .. in LETHAL WEAPON 4

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:45

CINEMA TEL:5934793

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria

One of Walt Disney's best movies MULAN

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Risham Yanes Theatre TEL:4625155

Watch out for the new play

Sports

IOC desperately trying to salvage sullied image

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AFP) — The first move to salvage the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) sullied image will begin here this weekend with at least nine members expected to be thrown out of the organization.

A report into the Salt Lake City scandal will be delivered to the IOC's executive board on Sunday and the long promised house cleaning will begin with the expulsions.

So far 13 names of suspected members have been leaked. Two of those named, Finnish IOC member Pirjo Haeggman and Bashir Mohammad Attarabulsi of Libya resigned this week. Haeggman insisted she was guilty only of being naive, not corruption.

According to a German specialist sports magazine the other 11 are Kim Un Yong (South Korea), Vitaly Smirnov (Russia), Augustin Carlos Arroyo (Ecuador), Jean-Claude Ganga (Congo), Zein El Abdin Abdel Gadir (Sudan), Anton Geesink (Holland), Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye (Ivory Coast), Lamine Keita (Mali), Charles Nderitu Mukora (Kenya), Sergio Santander Fantini (Chile) and David Sikhumani Sibandze (Swaziland).

Kim, one of the IOC's most powerful members, has angrily denied any wrong doing, claiming he is the victim of a plot to stop him from taking over as presi-

dent when Juan Antonio Samaranch retires in 2001.

Smirnov, another senior member, also denies any wrong doing. According to IOC sources both men are unlikely to be expelled.

But others, such as Ganga, will almost certainly be sacked. He made a \$60,000 profit on a Utah land deal arranged by a member of the Salt Lake committee.

The scandal broke late last year when Swiss IOC member Marc Hodler blew the whistle on members selling their votes for cash and gifts.

Since then Nagano and Sydney and Amsterdam have been drawn into the affair that threatens to bring down Samaranch.

Senior IOC members admit this weekend's expulsions could just be the start.

Vice-president Dick Pound, who headed the six-strong committee that investigated the 13 members, admitted this week that that influence peddling within the Olympic movement goes back to the early 1980s.

The Montreal lawyer even admitted this week that he had once been offered a million dollars for his vote in a television deal but he declined to give details.

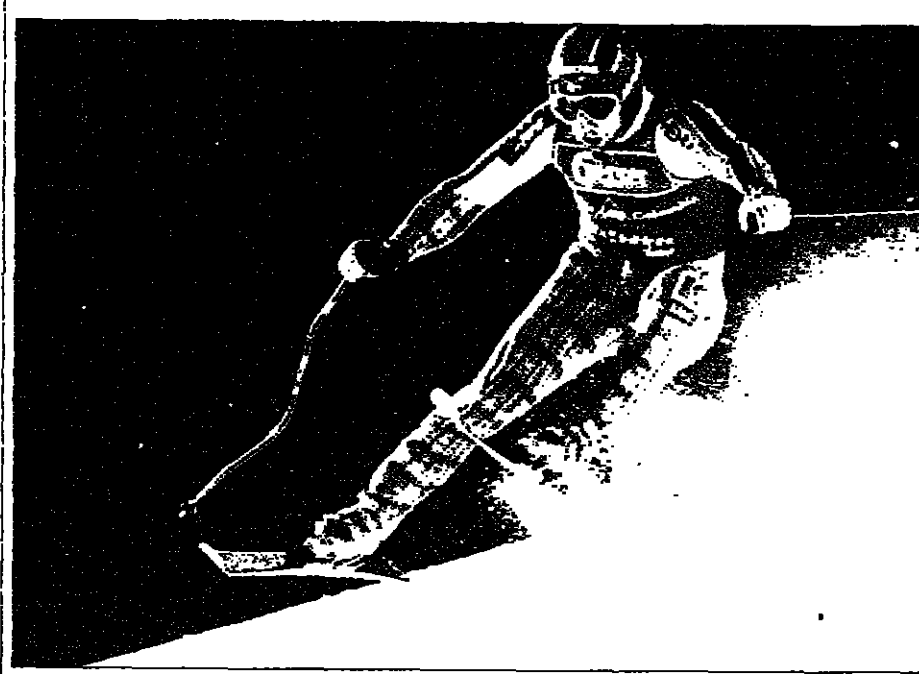
The affair has stunned the 78-year-old Samaranch, who is accused of failing to act when informed about corruption amongst members.

But the former Spanish diplomat, who took over the presidency in 1980, insists



International Olympic Committee (IOC) director general, Francois Carrard, during an IOC press conference at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland on Friday, the day before the key meeting of the committee investigating the Salt Lake City bribery scandal. Carrard announced the resignation of IOC member Bashir Mohammed. (AP photo)

Norway's Kjus wins World Cup downhill



Norway's Lasse Kjus speeds down the Streif racing track in Kitzbuhel to win men's World Cup downhill, split in two runs on Friday. Second placed his compatriot Kjetil-Andre Aamodt. (AFP photo)

Crazy day as NBA officially opens for business

NEW YORK (AP) — Everyone was calling it the busiest day in National Basketball Association history, and everyone was probably right.

Still, the official opening of league business Thursday had something missing — the signings of many of the biggest free agents.

The job of processing each and every new contract and trade was a slow one on the first full non-lockout day since June 30, and the expected signings of Antonio McDyess, Vlade Divac, Jerry Stackhouse, Hot Rod Williams, Christian Laettner and Joe Smith were delayed for one reason or another. Several deals went through, including Latrell Sprewell being traded from Golden State to New York, and most of the teams opened training camps.

"It was so unorganized, it was incredible," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "You have to deal with a chaotic, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants routine. We had guys with physicals, getting contracts signed. We have to move guys in and out of practice."

And it doesn't look like the chaos will end anytime soon.

Teams will have only a few days to practice before beginning exhibition games, and the regular season will begin Feb. 5. Each team will play 50 games in 90 nights. Teams were finally allowed to start signing contracts and finalising transactions at 2 p.m. The league had a full staff of attorneys on hand to process each of the deals, and a few complications arose to slow the process down. There were no apparent hitches in clearing the first deal, a trade sending Sprewell to the New York Knicks for John Starks, Chris Mills and Terry Cummings.

Sprewell brings a tarnished reputation to a team anxious over the public relations risk. He was suspended for 68 games last season and had his contract terminated after he choked and threatened to kill coach P.J. Carlesimo at a Warriors practice.

Just three years ago, when the Knicks traded Anthony Mason to Charlotte, team president Checketts made an issue of saying the team would only bring in solid citizens.

Sprewell hasn't exactly fit

that description.

"A lot has happened in my thinking over past 48 hours or so," Checketts said. "For me to make the statement I made about not wanting certain players on our team, I guess I would have to say it's pretty judgmental and self-righteous, and I regret having said those things because it's not fair for me to judge people."

The Knicks reiterated that they were not interested in signing free agent forward Dennis Rodman, who retired earlier this week and then changed his mind.

He plans to elaborate on his plans Friday night on the "Tonight Show."

Rodman's agent, Dwight Manley, was in Salt Lake City to announce that another of his clients, Karl Malone, would be staying with the Utah Jazz for the rest of his career.

McDyess' return to Denver hit a roadblock when he and the Nuggets could not reach a contract agreement that appeared to be a done deal only 24 hours earlier.



Vlade Divac

Austrian Renate Goetschl edges Germany's Ertl in super-G

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP) — Austrian Renate Goetschl flashed down the World Cup super-G run Friday to clinch her third victory of the season.

"I had a really good run and really fast skis," said the 23-year-old Austrian.

Leader of the World Cup downhill standings, Goetschl won back-to-back downhill in Lake Louise, Canada, in November. But she had yet to win a Super-G this season. Goetschl completed the race in one minute, 13.25 seconds, edging German ace Martina Ertl by just four-hundredths of a second.

Goetschl skied aggressively down the steep and winding upper portion of the course, but she won the race in the flatter lower portion where she let her skis glide and picked up more speed than her rivals.

Ertl, with 12 career wins, has yet to claim a victory this season.

France's Regine Cavagnoud, who clinched her first victory in a downhill here Thursday after eight years on the ski circuit, was third.

It was another disappointing day for World Cup overall leader Alexandra Meisnitzer of Austria who finished out of the top-five.

The Austrian, winner of five World Cups this season, hasn't triumphed since Dec. 19 when she was fastest in a downhill in Veysonnaz, Switzerland.

Friday's race was marred by Catherine Borghi's horrific fall.

The Swiss skier lost her balance and crashed a few metres (yards) from the finish line and her leg appeared to give out as she twisted and slid down the hill. The 22-year-old screamed with pain as she lay crumpled in the finish area. Medical officials rushed to the scene and



Renate Goetschl of Austria raises her skis up in celebration after winning the World Cup women's Super-G in Cortina D'Ampezzo on Friday. The Tofane Dolomite mountains are seen in background (AP photo)

Borghi was immediately taken to hospital. Initial reports said Borghi had broken her shin bone

Boxing-Trainer looking to reconcile Tyson's personalities

NEW YORK (R) — In the next few weeks Tommy Brooks will be trying to reconcile the two faces of Mike Tyson.

Actually there seem to be many more faces than that, but for boxing purposes Tyson's new trainer will have enough on his hands to deal with just two of the fighter's many personalities. Brooks, a very candid man, especially considering he works in boxing, had been telling reporters before Tyson looked so sloppy against Frans Botha last Saturday that Tyson in the gym was working diligently on boxing basics such as coming in behind a jab, throwing combinations and being patient with his opponent.

But against Botha in Las Vegas another side of Tyson emerged.

The former heavyweight champion was often tentative, head-hunting throughout the fight and missing widely with looping left hooks and overhand rights. Tyson was eminently hittable throughout the fight, and if Botha had been a harder puncher he might have won in the early rounds and if he had not been over-confi-

dent he might have won on points.

Indeed, the South African was winning the bout on all three judges' scorecards before he walked into a tremendous Tyson right hand flush on the face that ended the scheduled 12-round fight at 2:59 of the fifth round.

Tyson looked so bad that some people connected with him who had been looking seriously at a third fight with Evander Holyfield in November now say Tyson is not nearly on track for that now. Tyson is expected to fight again in late April. An opponent has not officially been selected, although German Axel Schulz had been mentioned as a possibility.

Against Botha that "was not the Mike Tyson I had been working with the last couple of months," said Brooks in a telephone call on Thursday.

"You never know which guy is going up the stairs" to enter the ring, said Brooks, referring to the vagaries of working with fighters in general. "It's with fighters in general. It's with Mike, I can lead the horse to water but I can't make

him drink."

The confident, unbearable Mike Tyson, with a questionable sense of reality, revealed himself immediately after the fight by saying, "I'm a better fighter than I was against Evander."

But moments later another side of the fighter appeared, the contrite, just happy to be here Tyson: "I need to put on better shows. I'm just happy (Botha) gave me a chance to fight... Brooks, who will begin working with Tyson again in a few weeks, insisted that Tyson's failure to stick to the fight plan he had been working on in the gym was not an example of the former heavyweight champion's lack of discipline.

"It's not so much a lack of discipline. He has to reestablish confidence," said Brooks, who used to train Holyfield, who beat Tyson twice.

"Inactivity shakes your confidence," said Brooks, referring to Tyson's 19-month forced layoff after biting off a piece of Holyfield's ear in June 1997 and having his license to box revoked.

Brooks gave his fighter an

A-plus for power, but only a C-minus for effort "but an F for getting hit," he said to laughter.

"I think it was a let down," Brooks said about Tyson's performance against Botha. "I had seen the guy doing it for two months straight."

About Tyson's hearse's headlining, he added, "He was trying to prove something to himself and the public. It was not the Mike Tyson I had been working with the last couple of months."

Brooks is not alone in wondering which of Tyson's personalities was appearing in the weeks leading up to the fight and that night against Botha.

In one news conference, Tyson, after calmly answering many questions, suddenly exploded in an obscenity-filled rant that bore no resemblance to the subject at hand. Just a few days before the fight he went off again.

And in the fight itself he was penalised a point for unruly roughness and admitted he had tried to break Botha's arm in a clinch as the first round ended in chaos. It took

security guards and both corners to break the two men up and delayed the start of the second round.

"In the heat of the battle sometimes everything gets thrown out," Brooks said of Tyson's lack of ring discipline.

The question is which personality Tyson did not throw out.

Great Investment Opportunity

An owner of a Well-established touristic village in the heart of old historic Madaba is looking for investors to invest in this Promising Venture and location.

Please call at: 079/596419

Turino HOTEL / Sweifiyeh
Business Opportunity
Visit Our Web Site
www.turino-hotel.com/invest
Tel : 5863944

Job Opportunity

A leading Company In the fast moving (FMCG) is looking to recruit a :
Sales Rep.

- Minimum 3 years experience in Sales (FMCG'S).
- BA graduate.
- Holding a valid driving License.
- Knowledge of distribution Channels.
- Age 25 to 35.
- Experience in Jordan Market.

Secretary

- Maintain and organize files and filing system both on the computer and manually.
- Execute and follow up all correspondence between the organization and its environment.
- Perform public relations duties as the Job May require.
- Minimum 3 years experience.
- Experience in Computer word Processing skills.

Store Keeper Incharge

- Qualified for person to work as a store keeper in charge for big food industrial co.
- Good knowledge in English, computer and cardex systems.

Apply with a latest copy of Detailed Curriculum vitae, copies of passport and photo within 15 days to:

P.O.Box 191
Sahab industrial Estate 11512 Jordan
Fax 962 - 6 - 4023773

Security Council resumes Iraq discussion, little expected

UNITED NATIONS (AP)

— After a week's lapse, the Security Council resumed consultations on Iraq on Friday, trying to forge ahead with proposals to resurrect oversight of Baghdad's weapons programmes while improving the humanitarian situation for Iraqis.

Council diplomats, however, expected little progress in the discussions and were resigned heading into the meeting that it would take several more sessions before any consensus was reached.

"I think this is going to be a long process dealing with Iraq and this is another step in that process," said the deputy U.S. ambassador, Peter Burleigh.

The council has four written proposals — from the United States, France, Russia and Canada — and more could come, diplomats said.

The initiatives were submitted last week, when the

council held its first serious discussion about Iraq since the U.S.-British airstrikes in December.

Following the strikes, Baghdad announced it would no longer allow U.N. weapons inspections that, under the U.N. resolutions that ended the Gulf War, were the only way to lift the trade sanctions.

Several council members also came out strongly against trying to resume disarmament work as it had been done, arguing that the airstrikes shattered an inspection programme that hadn't been working for months anyway.

"The old way of doing business cannot work now," a Chinese diplomat said Friday. Though China hasn't submitted a proposal of its own, Beijing was studying the proposals and had "no problem," with either the Russian or the French initiatives, the diplomat said, speaking on condition

of anonymity.

Russia and France want to see a lifting of the oil embargo, but with controls to make sure the money isn't used to rebuild weapons programmes. The proposals couple the end of the embargo with long-term monitoring of Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes.

Washington's initiative would let Iraq sell unlimited amounts of oil, as long as the strict U.N. controls remain to ensure that the proceeds are used to buy food and medicine for the Iraqi people.

Canada has suggested convening two meetings — one on disarmament and one on humanitarian aid — to assess how to move forward.

Along those same lines, the U.N. Special Commission, which has inspected Iraq's arms programmes since 1991, was finishing up documents to

help council members assess the status of disarmament, officials said Friday.

Included in the documents will be a scenario of how a monitoring programme could work if it were implemented now, taking into account the uncertainties about what Iraq may still be hiding, U.N. officials say.

Under U.N. resolutions, the monitoring programme was supposed to have been established once inspectors declared Iraq weapons free. That certification would have also let the council lift the embargo.

Chief weapons inspector Richard Butler has said Iraq still needs to disclose information about its weapons programmes — particularly in the biological field — before he can give Baghdad a clean bill of health.

Iraq says it has completely disarmed and accuses the inspectors of working for the United States to prolong sanctions indefinitely.

Cyprus leaders snub visiting British envoy

NICOSIA (AFP)

— Leaders of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities on divided Cyprus snubbed British envoy Sir David Hannay on Friday by boycotting separate engagements with the diplomat, officials said.

Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides is refusing to attend a working dinner Friday with Hannay to protest at "unfortunate" comments made by the envoy on his arrival Thursday, government spokesman Christos Stylianides said.

"With this action he [Clerides] wishes to express his disappointment and dislike for certain parts of his statements," he told reporters.

In a letter to the British High Commission, Clerides expressed dismay with Hannay's remarks referring to "tactical advantages and manoeuvres" in comments on a Greek-Cypriot government freeze on arms purchases.

He is also apparently angry over Hannay's comments that Cyprus should not expect any reciprocal acts by Turkey after the cancellation last month of controversial plans by the island's Greek-Cypriot government to deploy Russian ground-to-air missiles.

The high commission, which was due to host the dinner, also announced that Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash refused to meet Hannay for a scheduled luncheon.

It said Hannay had wanted to hear the views of Clerides and Denktash on British government aims to push for a lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem and on a U.N. resolution calling for a reduction in weapons on the island.

"We regret therefore that neither has taken the opportunity to give us their views," the statement said.

U.N.-sponsored talks on a settlement of the island's 25-year division were broken off in the summer of 1997.

Cyprus has been divided since Turkey occupied its northern third in 1974 following a Greek-Cypriot coup aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

Senate begins submitting questions in Clinton trial

WASHINGTON (R)

— Senators got a chance to unleash their pent-up questions in President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial on Friday, quizzing his accusers and defenders even as they scrambled to work out the next steps in the trial.

After hearing six days of legal presentations, senators began submitting written queries through Chief Justice William Rehnquist as only the second presidential impeachment trial in U.S. history entered a new and increasingly uncertain phase.

The first questions offered each side a chance for rebuttals, a sore point with House of Representatives prosecutors who were angry they would miss a chance to answer the three-day White House defence presentation that concluded on Thursday.

"Is it the opinion of the House managers that the president's defence team in the presentation mischaracterised any factual or legal issue in this case?" the first question, from four Republican senators, asked.

Prosecutors, who publicly had objected to what they claimed was a distorted and incomplete White House description of their case, not surprisingly found several examples.

"There are a number of mischaracterisations and statements that we disagree with that the president's defence team made," Republican Representative Ed Bryant of Tennessee said.

Outside the chamber, Democrats tried to seize the

momentum generated by the White House defence arguments, pushing for a quick conclusion to the trial on two articles of impeachment alleging Clinton committed perjury and obstructed justice in the Monica Lewinsky case.

Many Republicans, however, stressed the need to listen to the two days of questions before making any decisions.

House prosecutors urged Senate leaders in a letter to invite Clinton to testify, saying his appearance at a deposition and later the trial could help bring the proceedings to a quick and fair end.

"Because the president is the only individual with knowledge of almost every material fact relevant to the trial, his testimony could greatly help to expeditiously and fairly bring this matter to a close," lead prosecutor Representative Henry Hyde, an Illinois Republican, said in a letter to Senate Republican leader Trent Lott and Democratic leader Tom Daschle.

Few senators have expressed interest in seeking Clinton's testimony, and scepticism seemed to be growing even among Republicans about the need to prolong the trial by calling any witnesses.

But there was no clear consensus on what the next step should be.

Lott suggested to reporters there could be another private caucus of the entire Senate early next week to discuss the issue. Daschle said there were no immediate plans to change the current trial schedule.

"Until you hear otherwise, you have to expect that what is

currently agreed upon procedure will be the one we will follow," Daschle told reporters.

"At some point Sen. Lott and I will have to sit down or a larger group sit down and see if we can't resolve what might be another alternative. I think it's premature to do that until there is some real indication there is a desire on both sides to find an alternative. That isn't clear to me yet," he said.

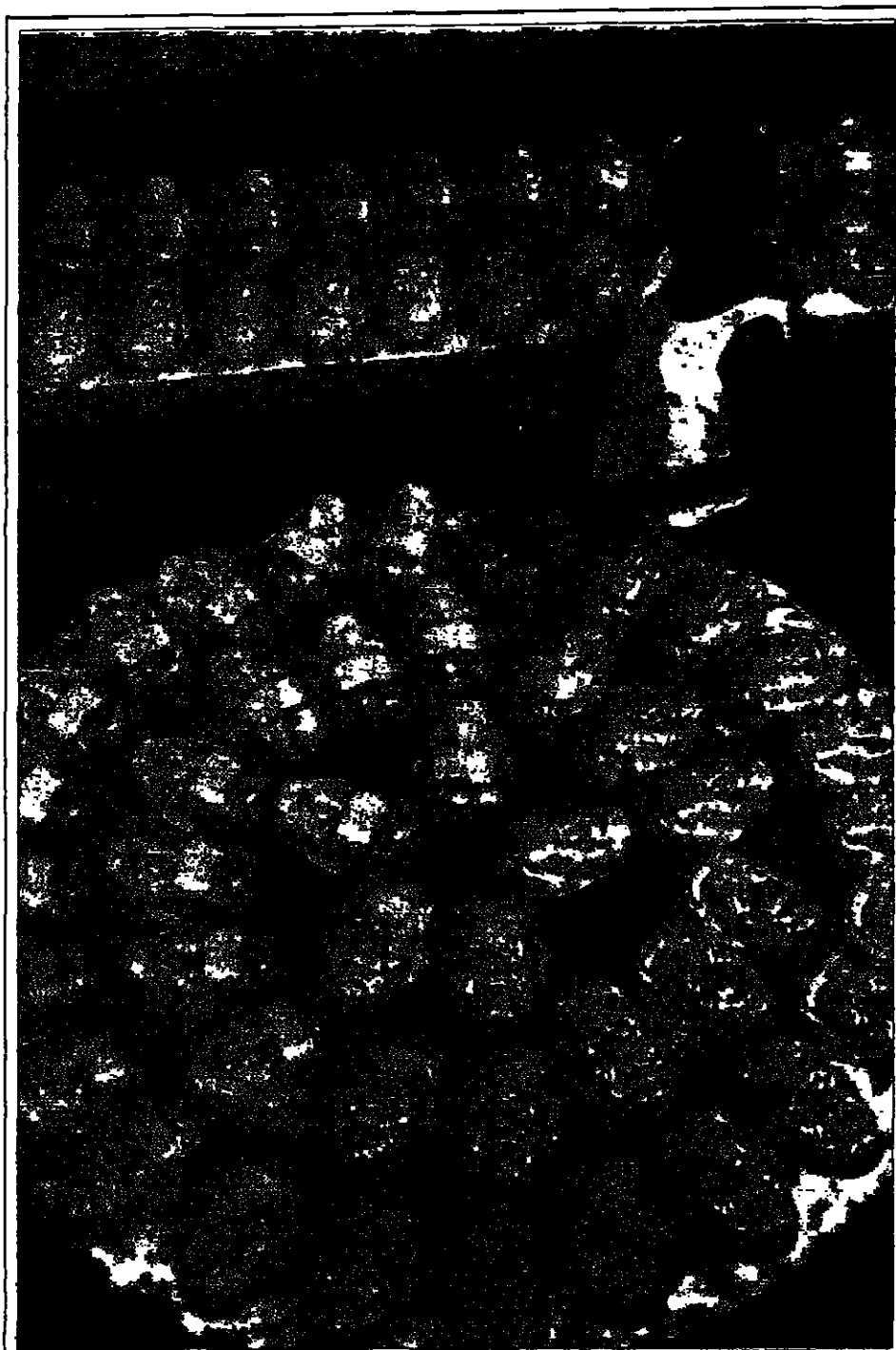
Under the trial procedure unanimously agreed to two weeks ago, the Senate will spend the next two days exploring conflicts in the record that were highlighted by House prosecutors and White House lawyers, submitting written questions to each side.

On Monday, a Democratic motion to dismiss the case will be in order, followed by a motion to subpoena witnesses. House prosecutors and the White House will have to submit lists of potential witnesses.

Daschle said he was increasingly optimistic the motion to dismiss could succeed. If it fails, the 45 Democrats would only have to be joined by six Republicans to reject witnesses and in move directly to consideration of the two articles of impeachment approved by the House on largely party-line votes last month.

Some Democrats have pushed a proposal for an up-or-down vote on Monday on whether to remove him from office, but that still appeared unlikely to happen.

The questioning phase was expected to conclude on Saturday.



A CLINTON CARNIVAL: Zelia do Carmo, 50, works Friday in a factory making masks depicting the face of Bill Clinton for Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Brazil's week-old decision to let its currency float against the dollar hasn't calmed investor nerves about Latin America's largest economy. Carnival in Rio begins Feb. 14 (AP photo)

Three Algerian Islamists get eight years after big trial

FLEURY-MEROGIS

(AFP) — A French court Friday handed down eight-year jail sentences against the three ringleaders of networks set up in France to support hardline Islamist fighters in Algeria.

Mohammad Chalabi, Mohammad Kerrouche and Mourad Tacine were sentenced to eight years each in jail and banned from ever living in France after serving their terms.

The three Algerians, who went on trial in September in France's biggest terrorist trial, faced up to 10 years for aiding and abetting terrorism.

Of the 135 other defendants in the 40-day trial, one of the most controversial ever held in France, 31 people were acquitted and a further 20 cleared of terrorist-related activities.

The defendants were accused of involvement in three French-based networks believed to have

provided one of the toughest terror groups in Algeria, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), with weapons, hideouts, forged papers, medical supplies, clothing and new recruits.

The trial held in a makeshift courtroom near the Fleury-Merogis prison south of Paris caused heated debate in France about the possibility of meting out justice to 138 people at once.

By day three of last year's trial almost all the 60-odd lawyers had walked out, followed by most of the defendants, contesting both the conditions and the venue, a prison staff training school gymnasium in the shadow of the jailhouse.

Chalabi, 43, the main defendant in the case, was described as a convicted gangster turned Islamist in the early 1990s. He allegedly recruited fighters for the hardline cause in Algeria.

Identified during the time as being of Algerian citizenship, Chalabi retorted: "No! Muslim. I have nothing to do with the military junta. They are Algerian. I am a Muslim."

An estimated 80,000 people have died in Algeria since armed rebels took up guerrilla warfare after the cancellation of 1992 elections that the now-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Kerrouche, alias Salim, 38, was arrested in Britain on April 2, 1996 and later handed over to the French authorities.

The prosecution said Chalabi was also running a network to collect arms and medical supplies for Algerian fighters before coming into contact with a network specialised in forging identity papers headed by Tacine.

Tacine, 38, also provided hideouts in France for rebels on the run.

Elvis Presley songs in Latin and Sumerian

HELSINKI (R) — A Finnish academic known for recording Elvis Presley songs in Latin is planning a new record of eternal hits — this time in the ancient Sumerian language. Jukka Ammondt told Reuters he intends to bring out a Sumerian single in the next few months and an album in the autumn. "Elvis would have liked the idea because the ancient Sumerians had big parties and drums and rattles, and the roots of rock may go back to man's earliest efforts to get a grip on life," said Ammondt.

Woman for 99-year-old widower wanted

BEIJING (R) — A 99-year-old Chinese widower who posted a lonely hearts message in a local newspaper looking for a second wife has been swamped with offers, the semi-official China News Service said. Zhang Kebiao, a ruddy-faced author who looked "only about 80," was seeking someone to relieve the loneliness and torment after his first spouse died two years ago, the agency said. "Any woman will do, but I hope that she understands the old saying, 'half of woman is man,'" said his lonely hearts message.

Lebed challenged to boxing match

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian businessman has challenged presidential hopeful Alexander Lebed to bring his foul mouthed criticism to the boxing ring. Oleg Yanovets of the Regional Fuel Company in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region, where Lebed is governor, wants to thrash out their differences at a local boxing tournament on Jan. 30. Both men are former amateur boxers. A scowling Lebed was widely shown on Russian television at a public hearing this week hearing the private fuel company's general director, Marat Saitov, in obscene language about the failings of the local coal industry. He could not immediately be reached for his response to the challenge.

Strip search after prank call

FARGO (AP) — A caller claiming to be a police officer talked a male restaurant manager into strip-searching a 17-year-old female worker, authorities said. The male caller told the Burger King manager that the worker was a theft suspect, gave a description of her and persuaded the manager to perform the search. After finding no evidence of a theft, the manager became suspicious and tried to trace the call but to no avail. Prank calls were made to several Fargo businesses Wednesday night. Kim Miller, a spokeswoman for Miami-based Burger King, said the company has no regulations on how workers suspected of crimes should be searched.

International hunt after airline 'loses' granny

LONDON (AFP) — A grandmother flying home from a Christmas visit to relatives became the focus of a trans-continental search when an airline lost track of her en route, according to British press reports Friday. Nancy Brock, 70, left her daughter's home in Mansfield, central England, 10 days ago after spending Christmas and New Year there. Brock ended up flying on four airlines, landed in five countries and spent three nights trying to get home to Zimbabwe after visiting Britain. What should have been an 18-hour flight eventually took her over 80 hours, while her family frantically tried to track her down.

Russia to keep Mir station in orbit for three more years

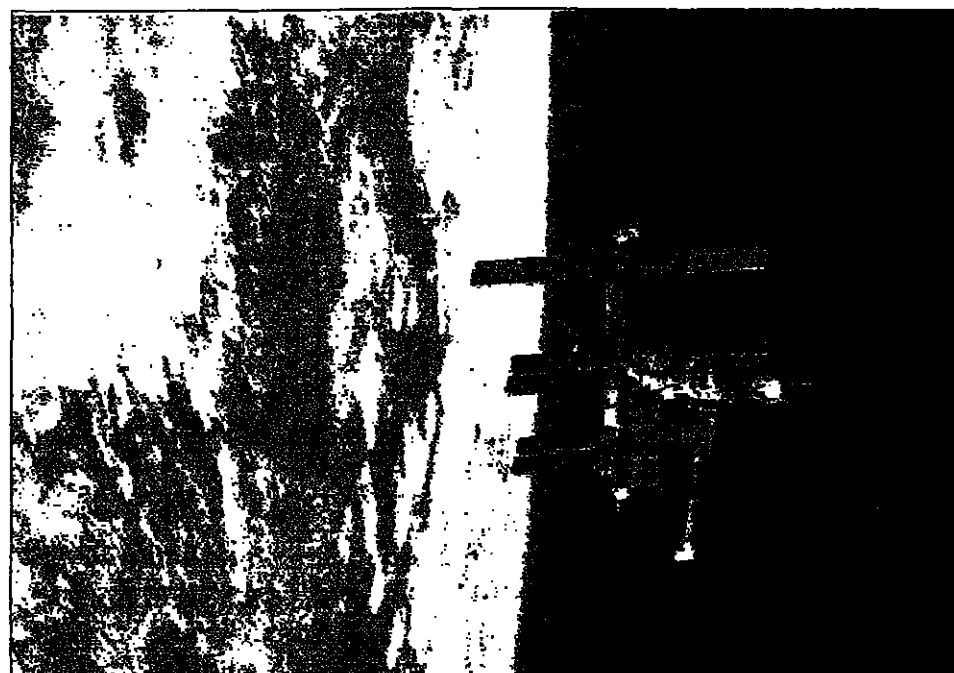
MOSCOW (AP)

— Russian space officials and cosmonauts sighed with relief Friday when Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov ordered them to extend the lifetime of their beloved, ageing Mir space station for another three years.

At NASA's urging, Russia had earlier agreed to abandon the nearly 13-year-old Mir in June and concentrate its meagre resources on the new international space station, which has already faced delays because of Russia's financial troubles.

But Primakov's order allows space officials to run Mir through 2002 — on the condition that private investors pay all its expenses, estimated at \$250 million a year.

The order said unidentified "Russian and foreign contractors and investors" would help set a programme for



The Russian space station Mir is seen in this file photo over the Pacific Ocean during rendezvous operations with the space shuttle Discovery on Feb. 6, 1995 (AP photo)

Mir's extended operation within three months.

The state-controlled RKK Energia, which operates the Mir, said last fall that it had found a private investor who would lend money to keep Mir in orbit on condition the Russian government guarantees his loan.

Primakov's order, released by the government Friday, didn't mention any loan guarantees, saying only that Mir's lifetime would be extended by using non-government funds.

Sergei Krikalov, a Mir veteran and member of the first crew for the international space station, hailed

Primakov's decision.

"Mir still can fly, so there is no reason to discard it if money can be found to keep it in orbit," he told The Associated Press. Private funding of the Mir means "continuing Mir's operation won't hamper Russia's work on the international station," he said.

For the cash-strapped Russian space agency, the decision to extend Mir's life with private funds relieves the "headache" of trying to support the station, agency spokesman Sergei Gorbunov said, according to the Itar-Tass news agency.

The Mir, launched in February 1986, has operated far longer than any other space station. It suffered a series of serious breakdowns and accidents in 1997, including a near-fatal collision with a cargo ship, but has been running smoothly for more than a year now. It currently has two Russian cosmonauts aboard.

Expected to last just five years at the time of its launch, Mir has proven rugged enough to survive various malfunctions and provided the crews with valuable experience in space repairs. It has also been useful for studying long-term human shifts in space, with some crew members staying for more than a year at a time.

The Mir has hosted dozens of foreign astronauts, including seven Americans, who have paid hundreds of millions of dollars for the opportunity — a welcome boost for the beleaguered Russian space

agency.

NASA spokesman Rob Navias said the decision to extend the Mir's life was an internal Russian development.

"Energia and the Russian Space Agency continue to affirm that the international space station and their commitments to supporting it remain their top priority, and none of that has changed or would change under any private sponsorship arrangement that the Russians may have found," he said.

Russians' rancor about plans to abandon Mir also stems from their feeling that without a space station of their own, they will be left playing a secondary role to Americans in the new project.

However, Russia's government has made it clear that it can't afford two separate space stations. Space officials decided to give priority to the 16-nation new station, already one year behind schedule because of Russia's failure to build a key segment.

The first two parts were launched in November and December, though no people are expected to start living on the station for at least a year.

THANKS TO GOD
Genius is only patience.
And by that His Majesty King Hussein predominated his calamity.

Farouk Sa'd Abujaber